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Encounter

December 1967

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Twelve Poems
Pablo Neruda

French Letters
Gore Vidal

Authors & Viet Nam
Arthur Schlesinger jr.

Letter from America
James Morris

Addison as Spectator
Peter Gay

Steinerian Agony
Anthony Burgess

Buster Keaton
Eric Rhode

Men with Long Eyes
Gordon Beattie Taylor

Pornography & Crime
E. van den Haag

Welfare Crisis
Arthur Seldon

Edited by Melvin J Lasky & Nigel Dennis

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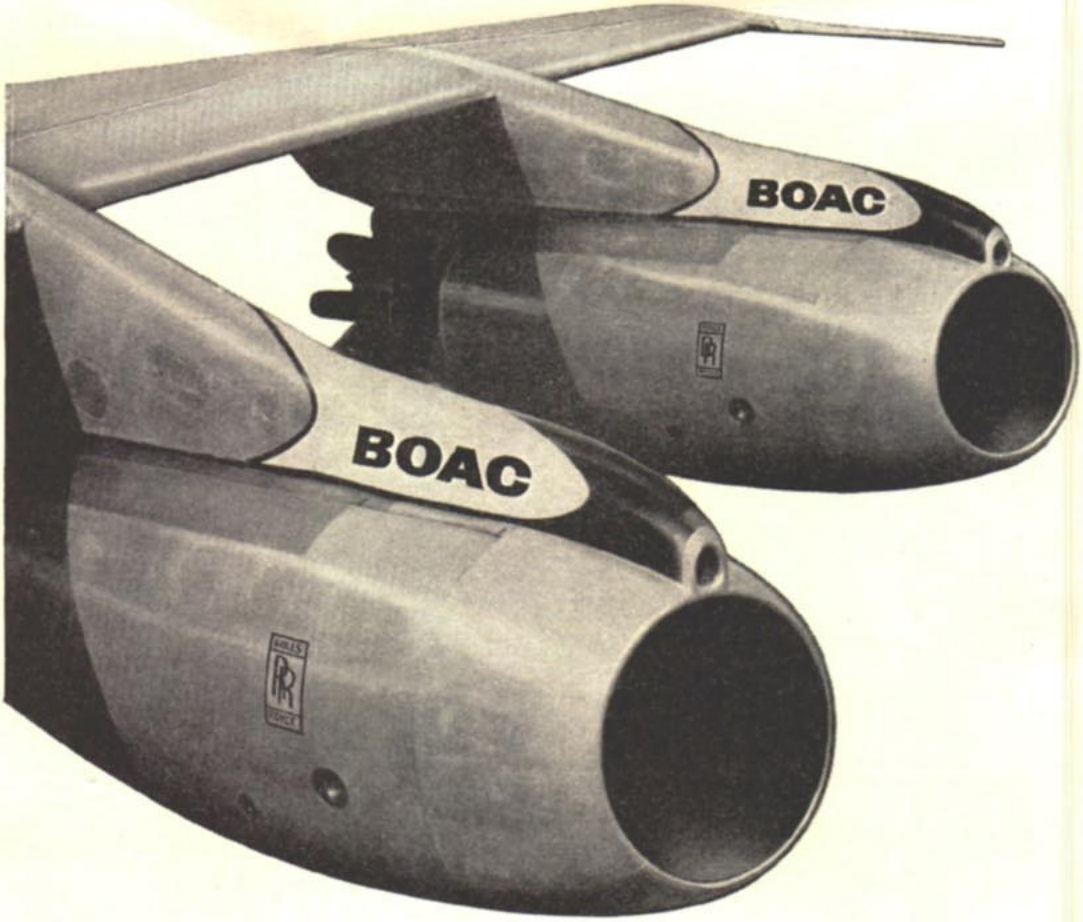

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Encounter

DECEMBER 1967
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Twelve Poems by Pablo Neruda

Cats' Dream

How neatly a cat sleeps,
sleeps with its paws and its substance,
sleeps with its wicked claws,
and with its ruthless blood,
sleeps with all the rings—
a series of burnt circles—
which form the odd geology
of its sand-coloured tail.

I should like to sleep like a cat,
with all the fur of time,
with a tongue rough as flint,
with the dry sex of fire;
and after speaking to no one,
stretch myself over the world,
over roofs and landscapes,
with a passionate desire
to hunt the rats in my dreams.

I have seen how the cat asleep
would undulate, how the night
flowed through it like dark water;
and at times, it was going to fall
or possibly plunge into
the bare deserted snowdrifts.
Sometimes it grew so much in sleep
like a tiger's great-grandfather,
and would leap in the darkness over
rooftops, clouds and volcanoes.

Sleep, sleep, cat of the night,
with episcopal ceremony
and your stone-hewn moustache.
Take care of all our dreams;
control the obscurity
of our slumbering prowess
with your relentless heart
and the great ruff of your tail.

Ballad

Come back, cried a guitar to me,
near Rancagua, in autumn.
All the poplars wore
the colour and quiver of bells.
It was cold, and the sky spread
amply over the sadness.

A drunk came into the canteen,
stumbling under his load of grapes
which filled his hat to the brim
and were coming out of his eyes.
He had mud on his boots.
He had trampled on the effigy
of autumn, and had flattened
all its yellow fingers.

I never went back to the prairies.
But hardly do the hours ring out,
halting and dishonoured,
than there falls across my heart
the buttons and the smile;
when they have stopped being benign,
the numerals of forgetting,
that guitar still calls me,
and now so much time has passed
that perhaps nothing exists,
neither the prairie nor the autumn;
and I would arrive of a sudden
like a ghost in the great void,
with a hatful of grapes,
asking for a guitar;
and since nobody would be there,
no one would understand anything,
and I would trail back, closing
that door which does not exist.

THESE POEMS *are taken from two single volumes of Neruda,* Estravagario, *1958, and* Plenos Poderes, *1962, where anyone interested in translation for its own sake (or any officer of the Translation Police) may find the originals. I have confined myself to these two small islands in the huge hemisphere of Neruda's poetic output for three reasons:*

(1) *They represent what Latin American critics have called Neruda's "autumnal" manner, his change from the panoramic to a quirky personal style, closer to our own lyric tradition;*

(2) *these two volumes are particular favourites of Neruda himself;*

(3) *they contain poems with which I feel particularly in tune, an essential prerequisite, I feel, for any act of translation.*

ALISTAIR READ

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To Sorrow

II

Sorrow, I need
your black wing.
So much sun, so much honey in the topaz,
each ray smiling
in the meadow
and all is abundant light about me,
all like a whirring bee in the high air.
And so
give me
your black wing,
sister sorrow.
I need sometimes the sapphire to be
extinguished, and the oblique
mesh of the rain to fall,
the weeping of the earth;
I long for
that battered hulk in the estuary,
the great house in darkness
and my mother
searching
for paraffin
and filling the lamp,
never bringing light to birth without a sigh.

The night was not born.

The day was slipping away
toward its own local cemetery,
and, between bread and shade,
I have a memory
of myself
in the window,
looking at what was not,
at what was not happening
and a black wing of water coming down
over that heart which there perhaps
I forgot for ever, there in the window.

Now I am missing
the black light.

Give me your slow blood,
cold
rain,
give me your fearful spread!
Give back into my keeping
the key
of the closed door,
ruined.

For a minute, for
a short life,
take away my light and leave me
to realise
my misery, my alienation,
trembling in the web
of twilight,
receiving into my being
the trembling
hands
of
the
rain.

To Wash A Child

Only the most ancient love on earth
will wash and comb the statue of the children,
straighten the feet and knees.
The water rises, the soap slithers,
and the pure body comes up to breathe
the air of flowers and motherhood.

Oh, the sharp watchfulness,
the sweet deception,
the luke-warm struggle!

Now the hair is a tangled
pelt crisscrossed by charcoal,
by sawdust and oil,
soot, wiring, crabs,
until love, in its patience,
sets up buckets and sponges,
combs and towels,
and, out of scrubbing and combing, amber,
primal scrupulousness, jasmines,
has emerged the child, newer still,
running from the mother's arms
to clamber again on its cyclone,
go looking for mud, oil, urine and ink,
hurt itself, roll about on the stones.
Thus, newly washed, the child springs into
life,
for, later, it will have time for nothing more
than keeping clean, but with the life lacking.

Planet

Are there stones of water on the moon?
Are there waters of gold?
What colour is autumn?
Do the days mesh into each other
until like a shock of hair
they all unravel? How much falls—
paper, wine, hands, dead bodies—
from the earth on that region?

Is it there that the drowned live?

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Apropos My Bad Education

Which is which, which is how?
Who knows how to take care of himself?

How natural the fish seem,
never appearing out of line,
perfect guests in the sea,
faultlessly dressed, always,
never a scale out of place,
bemedalled by the water.

But I? Every day I put
not only my feet on the table,
but my elbows too, and my kidneys,
lyre, soul and shotgun.

I don't know what to do with my hands,
and have thought of coming without them,
but where do I put my ring?
What feeble uncertainty!

Ultimately, I know no one,
I do not remember their names.

—You seem familiar to me.
—Are you not a smuggler?
—And you, Madam, aren't you the lover
of the alcoholic poet
who walked and walked endlessly,
aimlessly over the rooftops?
—I flew because I had wings.
—And you continue earthbound.
—I should like to have delivered her
like an Indian widow to a great pyre.
Could we not burn her now?
It would be breathtaking!

Another time, in an Embassy,
I fell in love with a brunette.
She would not undress there
and I rebuked her stiffly—
you are mad, my wild statue,
how can you move in your clothes?

They banished me brutally
from that and from other gatherings,
and if by mistake I approached,
they closed windows and doors.

I went then with gipsies
and with magicians,
shipless seafarers,
fishermen with no fish,
but all of them had their rules,
inconceivable protocols,
and my wretched education
brought me bad consequences.

So I neither go nor come,
neither dress nor walk naked.
I dropped the forks in the well
with the spoons and the knives.
I smile at myself alone,
never ask indiscreet questions,
and, when they come to bring me
to banquets, with great pomp,
I send my clothes—my shoes,
my shirt and my hat,
but even that does not please them—
my jacket was wearing no tie.

So, to be free of doubts,
I plumped for an upright life,
as actively lazy as possible.
I purified my intentions,
went out to dine alone with myself.
Thus I left, keeping my silence.
Sometimes I dragged myself in
but without much enthusiasm,
and I went to bed alone, reluctantly,
so as not to mistake my room.

Goodbye, for here I am arriving.

Good morning, I'm off in a hurry.

When they wish to see me, now they know.
Let them look for me where I am not;
and if they have time and language left,
they may talk with my picture.

Oh, What Bottomless Saturdays!

Oh, what bottomless Saturdays!

Fascinating, this planet,
with so many people in motion:
waves of feet in the hotels,
impatient motorcyclists,
railroads running to the sea,
and so many stationary girls
whipped off on whirring wheels.

Every week comes to an end
in men, women and sand,
must keep moving, missing nothing,
climb inconsequential hills,
drink in music without meaning,
come back exhausted to the concrete.

I drink away every Saturday,
never forgetting the prisoner
confined behind cruel walls.
His days no longer have names,
and that murmur, crossing, coursing,
washes round him like a sea,
without his knowing what the wave is,
wave of a humid Saturday.

Oh what exasperating Saturdays,
armed to the teeth with mouths and legs,
unrestrained, in full cry,
drinking past sense—
let us not complain about the rabble
not wishing to keep us company.

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Return To A City

What have I arrived in? I ask them.

Who am I in this lifeless city?

I can find neither the street
nor the roof of the crazy girl
who once loved me.

There is no doubt about the curving branches,
the monsoon green and boiling,
the scarlet spittle
in the eroded streets,
the air heavy—but where,
where was I, who was I?
I understand little, except the ashes.

The betel-seller looks at me,
recognising neither my shoes
nor my recently resurrected face.
Perhaps his grandmother would grant me
a *salaam*, but it so happens
that she succumbed while I was travelling,
dropped deep into the well of death.

I slept in such a building
fourteen months and the corresponding years;
I wrote out my misery.
I bit
innocently into bitterness.
I pass now and the door is not there.
The rain has been working overtime.

Now it dawns on me that I have been
not just one man but several,
and that I have died so many times
with no notion of how I was reborn,
as if the act of changing clothes
were to force me to live another life,
and here I am without the least idea
of why I cannot recognise a soul,
of why no one is recognising me,
as if everyone here were dead
and I alive in the midst of such forgetting,
a bird that still survives—
or, the reverse, the city watches me,
and realises I am the one who is dead.

I walk through the silk bazaars,
and the markets of wretchedness.
It is hard to believe in the streets
as the self-same streets, in the black eyes,
hard as nailpoints,
which glare back against my glances,
and in the pale Golden Pagoda
with all its frozen idolatry;
it has no eyes now, no hands,
no longer any fire.
Goodbye, streets soiled by time,
goodbye, goodbye, lost love.
I return to the wine of my house,
I return to the love of my loving,
to what I was and to what I am,
water and sunk earth ripe with apples,
months with lips and with names.
I return not to come back;
no more do I wish to mislead myself.
It is dangerous to wander
backward, for all of a sudden
it is a prison, the past.

Through A Closed Mouth The Flies Enter

Why, with those red flames at hand,
have they got ready to burn the rubies?

Why does the heart of the topaz
reveal a yellow honeycomb?

Why does the rose amuse itself
changing the colour of its dreams?

Why does the emerald shiver
like a drowned submarine?

Why does the sky grow pale
under the June stars?

Where does the lizard's tail
get its supply of fresh paint?

Where is the underground fire
that revives the carnations?

Where does the salt acquire
the transparency of its glance?

Where did the carbon sleep
that it awoke so dark?

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And where, where does the tiger buy
its stripes of mourning, its stripes of gold?

When did the jungle begin
to be aware of its own perfume?

When did the pine tree realise
its own sweet-smelling consequence?

When did the lemons learn
the same laws as the sun?

When did smoke learn to fly?

When do roots converse?

How does water reside in stars?
Why is the scorpion poisonous,
the elephant benign?

What is the tortoise brooding on?
Where does shade withdraw to?
What song does the rain repeat?
Where do the birds go to die?
And why should leaves be green?

What we know is so little,
and we presume so much,
and learn so slowly
that we ask questions, then die.
Better for us to keep our pride
for the city of the dead
on the day of the departed,
and there, when the wind blows through
the holes in your skull,
it will unveil to you such enigmas,
whispering the truth
through the spaces that were your ears.

Horses

It was from the window I saw the horses.

I was in Berlin, in winter. The light
was without light, the sky skyless.

The air was white like a moistened loaf.

From my window, I could see a deserted arena,
a circle bitten out by the teeth of winter.

All at once, led out by a man,
ten horses were stepping into the snow.

Emerging, they had scarcely rippled into existence
like flame, than they filled the whole world of my eyes,
empty till now. Faultless, flaming,
they stepped like ten gods on broad, clean hooves,
their manes recalling a dream of pure grace.

Their rumps were globes, were oranges.

Their colour was amber and honey, was on fire.

Their necks were towers
carved from the stone of pride,
and in their furious eyes, sheer energy
showed itself, a prisoner inside them.

And there, in the silence, at the mid
point of the day, in a dirty, disgruntled winter,
the horses' intense presence was blood,
was rhythm, was the beckoning Grail of being.

I saw, I saw, and, seeing, I came to life.
There was the unwitting fountain, the dance of gold, the sky,
the fire that sprang to life in beautiful things.

I have obliterated that gloomy Berlin winter.

I shall not forget the illuminating horses.

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Summary

I am happy with the mountainous debts
I took on myself. In my life,
a welter of odd material things have accumulated—
feeble ghosts which went on upsetting me,
insistent material manipulations,
an inexplicable wind which ruffled me,
the stab of some wounding kisses, the hard reality
of my brothers,
the rigid demand on myself of watchfulness,
the impulse to stay myself, myself alone,
in a weakness of self-pleasuring.
For that reason—water on stone—my life has been
a singing between the chance and the requirement.

Full Powers

I write in the clear sun, in the teeming street,
at full sea-tide, in a place where I can sing;
only the wayward night inhibits me,
but, interrupted by it, I recover space,
I gather shadows to last me a long time.

The black crop of the night is growing
while my eyes meanwhile take measure of the meadows.
So, from one sun to the next, I forge the keys.
In the darkness, I look for the locks
and keep on opening broken doors to the sea,
for it to fill the wardrobes with its foam.

And I do not weary of going and returning.
Death, in its stone aspect, does not halt me.
I am weary neither of being nor of non-being.

Sometimes I puzzle over origins—
was it from my father, my mother or the mountains
that I inherited debts to minerality?

the fine threads spreading from a sea on fire?
And I know that I keep on going for the going's sake,
and I sing because I sing and because I sing.

There is no way of explaining what does happen
when I close my eyes and waver
as between two lost channels under water.
One lifts me in its branches toward my dying,
and the other sings in order that I may sing.

And so I am made up of a non-being,
and, as the sea goes battering at a reef
in wave on wave of salty white-tops
and drags back stones in its retreating wash,
so what there is in death surrounding me
opens in me a window out to living,
and, in a spasm of being, I go on sleeping.
In the full light of day, I walk in the shade.

Translated by Alastair Reid

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James Morris

Letter from Cranbury, N. J.

IT IS THIRTEEN YEARS since, looking for a place to settle for a few months in New Jersey, I first drove down Main Street in Cranbury. McCarthy was rampant. Eisenhower was President. The Supreme Court was about to deliver judgment on the desegregation of public schools. In Connecticut they were building the first nuclear submarine, and at Cape Canaveral they were erecting the first rocket gantries. A Mr. Smith had advertised his house for rent in the Princeton paper, and reading about it over a pizza pie one lunchtime, I had driven over in the Chevrolet that afternoon.

Flat, rich farmland surrounded Cranbury absolutely, and the little town lay there in guileless isolation. It looked more like New England than New Jersey—clapboarded, steepled, white, with a little lake for skating on, a fire house of consequence, a drug-store, a couple of food shops and the Cranbury Inn, where George Washington slept. I took the Smith house at once—it was next door to the inn—and my family and I moved in after Christmas. I remember our first weeks there with a happy clarity. The weather was so cold, crisp, and brilliant; the people so perfectly satisfied my preconceptions of American rural society; I loved sitting over my coffee with the local paper, chatting with Mr Leidtke about the fire engines, relaxing beneath the skill of a corporate hospitality that is among the glories of American technology. I very much liked the little town, and wrote essays about it incessantly.

Fifty miles from New York, fifty from Philadelphia, Cranbury was a gentle anachronism, a relic. Not far away ran the New Jersey Turnpike and the Philadelphia railroad line: but the twin conurbations, as they used to say in those days, did not quite meet. A patch of agriculture separated them still, and in the middle of it Cranbury lay. It was, miraculously, a proper farming town still. The commuters had not adopted it—the country was too flat, perhaps. The developers had ignored it. There was no industry. Even Princeton, only five or six miles away, seemed remote. The élite of Cranbury was a caste of comfortable truck-farmers, sustained by the Presbyterian Church and the volunteer fire brigade. In the dining-room of the Cranbury Inn a lady in blue played the electric organ. Only one or two families, sensitive to Trends, had demolished the porches on their Victorian homes to make them look more Colonial.

The other day, thirteen years later and less brash, I drove into Cranbury again, and found the Trends were catching up.

HOW DOES one gauge the temper of a place? By talking mostly, I suppose, eavesdropping, or dropping the sort of questions that don't hit anything in particular, but set up ripples all around. I talked all the time, when I went back to Cranbury—in the parlour over cinnamon toast, in the street through the Avis car window, in the Cranbury Inn over sherry before lunch—and I very soon realised that this was a much more urbane little town than I remembered it. The bumps seemed to be smoother. The grumbles were subtler. There was sherry before lunch, instead of the iced beers and knock-out Martinis I thought we always had.

This was partly me, but partly America. In 1954 there was still apparent, even in these old Eastern States, some of the original innocence of the Americans—something frank in their manners, which made one feel close still to the frontier and the immigrant ships. In those days English visitors, however young and bourgeois,

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were apt to patronise the Americans, and kindly give them advice about etiquette, claret, or the right way to run the world. Today things are different. America is no longer just the biggest and richest of the States, but the most experienced too—a weary Titan, as Matthew Arnold said of England itself long ago

> *Bearing on shoulders immense,*
> *Atlantean, the load,*
> *Well-nigh not to be borne,*
> *Of the too vast orb of her fate.*

A middle-aged American has grown up with supreme power, and the old joke of American naivety, horn-rimmed spectacles and ubiquitous cigar, has long been over. Suddenly, within our lifetimes, America has grown old, as the tragic irony of her history becomes apparent, and responsibility overwhelms her. There is a gravity to the Great Republic now, a tragic symbolism, that one feels nowhere else on earth.

Percolating through the potato fields, this sadder but grander new Americanism has even reached Cranbury. Nothing seems so simple as it used to be. The old landed bucolics, suggestive still of Town Meeting and minute men, no longer set the tone of the town. Instead, young, educated, urban people seem to predominate. The archetypal young executive, discovering those green fields at last, is setting a worldlier stamp upon the place. Politically Cranbury is more Republican than ever, so that even the few tame Democratic functionaries of the old days have disappeared: socially it is in a state of flux.

Its old social structure had been fairly precise. The rich farmers, mostly with Anglo-Saxon names, formed one circle. The volunteer firemen and their families, mostly of European origin, formed the core of another. The First Presbyterian Church overlapped them both. There were the odd outsiders, of course, from college professors to Negro labourers, but the general shape of things was straightforward. It had always been so, since the first English and Scottish farmers settled here in the 1680s. Now at last the lines are blurring. A highly educated builder of progressive views has turned a former bus shed into a chalet for himself and his wife, a talented mezzo-soprano. A young man with a taste for quality sports cars is doing lace designs in a studio. A reporter from the *Trenton Times* has taken up residence in the town, there is a drive-in bank opposite the drug store, and nothing feels quite so safe, snug, or certain.

And with the new suavity, dissension has arrived; between old hands and newcomers, between progressives and conservatives, between town and country, between doves and hawks—all the savage conflicts of the new America, blown here vaporously out of the cities along the railroad line, like historical smog.

COLOUR SCARCELY AROSE in Cranbury, thirteen years ago. There was a small Negro colony of four or five families, tucked away in Maplewood Avenue, down behind Main; and in the picking season migratory workers, Negro or Puerto Rican, used to turn up on the farms, living in shacks provided by the farmers. Now the Negro colony is larger, and race matters. New machinery has replaced much of the migratory labour, but many Negroes from the south have settled around Cranbury, in abandoned farm huts and cabins in the woods, or on the fringes of the town itself. Racial problems are still more tacit than overt: but there they are, the national agony in minute microcosm, illuminated by eager reformers, scoffed at by redneck reactionaries, eyed with puzzled disquiet by the people in the middle. Detroit is still a long way away, but even in Cranbury you may feel yourself to be standing somewhere near the edge of a revolutionary situation.

The liveliest, not to say most vicious, of Cranbury's controversies revolves around something called Cranbury Housing Associates. This is a body of activists, mostly newcomers, who concern themselves with the social conditions of the local poor—almost by definition Negroes. CHA is one of those organisations that seem pre-fused, waiting for an issue to explode about. Dropped like a yeast into the comfortable old Cranbury vat, it has set the place fermenting furiously. At first I did not quite understand why tempers were so inflamed, for CHA is scarcely subversive in its tactics, the social reforms it sponsors are not very drastic, the Negroes are as politely unobtrusive as ever, and it will be many an election before there is a black majority on the Cranbury rolls. But presently I realised that it was an organic kind of flush, menopausic. America is passing through one of her most terrible moments of change, a fundamental social upheaval in which many old assumptions are being questioned at last, many principles knocked topsy-turvy. Nothing is going to be quite the same again for the Americans, and never again will the Cranburies, or

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even the New Jersies, feel such separate and self-sufficient communities. America is far more a nation now than she was thirteen years ago, and a pain in one State, in one street even, hurts in all the rest.

So CHA, the most articulate organ of change in Cranbury, has assumed a symbolic charge. It is vaguely associated in many minds, I suspect, with Flower People, psychedelics, Black Muslims, draft evaders and all the other American heralds of doubt, transition, and dissent. Its work is in fact earnestly benevolent—doing up tenement houses, rebuilding rickety shacks, resettling homeless Negroes, giving a hand to down-and-outs. It has even won a Federal grant to help finance it all. Yet it is involved in a mesh of disputes, some legal, some just polemical—law-suits, letters-to-editors, back-of-the-hand aspersions and over-the-garden-fence snubs. It is tactful to discover just where your informant stands before you open your big mouth, and while the theme-phrases of my earlier Cranbury seemed to be all homely hospitality, tinged with rural philosophising, the conversational snatches that ring in my ears this time have a sharper timbre: *Things ain't the same like when you was here before—Rhodesia or New Jersey, what's the difference?—They never give up, do they?—They'll never learn, will they?—Meddlers they are, just dam' meddlers—He's a jerk—She's a real bitch—He means well—He's a real villain—No, sir, things just ain't the same, like they was last time you was here . . .*

PATCH BY PATCH, lot by lot, the spaces of a once limitless America are filled in: that small green gap on the Philadelphia railway line gets narrower each year. All around Cranbury spanking new industrial plants have arisen, pleasantly and expensively landscaped, hygienic as Kleenex itself, but still spreading across the countryside the mild effluvia of their presence. One is something to do with space. One is a publishing press. None are technically within the Cranbury boundaries, but they exert their subtle pressures on the township nevertheless, and draw it closer to the urban Nirvana. The conurbations of yesterday's jargon are the Megalopoles of today's. We are told that presently there will be one long city from Boston in the north by way of New York, Baltimore and Philadelphia to Washington in the south: and already, as those impeccable factories close in, I can imagine Main Street, Cranbury, preserved as a quaint rural enclave, a Historic Site, within the universal urbs.

For the moment it is only sub-urbs that threatens Cranbury's character, as it threatens almost every country settlement of the American East. The commuters have arrived. Two new housing estates are already in being, one demurely middle-income, one distinctly grander: with colonial-type garages and superannuated street lamps, with American eagles picked out in gold and Truman Capote on the back seats of Mercedes. The familiar syndrome embraces Cranbury at last: the estate-car-and-after-shave syndrome, the vodka-and-tonic-japanese-flower-arrangement syndrome, the bone-china-Mexican-holiday-cosmopolitan-awareness syndrome, which has set its stamp so powerfully upon American middle-class life, and makes on the whole so agreeable a contribution to the western culture. Cranbury hardly knew it before. Cranbury was pioneer, Presbyterian country. George Washington slept here.

Zoning restrictions maintain the tone of Cranbury, preventing close-density housing, and so far keeping the factories out of sight, though never out of mind. Local land values, all the same, have risen phenomenally. Thirteen years ago 200 dollars an acre was probably an average price for these farmlands. Now a Cranbury farmer could hope to get 5,000 dollars an acre, if a builder with planning permission coveted his land—which means that, in an area where farms are big and level, many a rural worthy is a potential millionaire, and can reasonably hope, one of these fine days, to jettison the family estate and escape to Florida once and for all.

Nothing could be more unsettling to a community than all these varied threats and promises. The great surprise of Cranbury, when I first went there, was its air of completeness, in a part of the world dedicated to impermanence. It felt *finished*. Now the whirlwind has fallen upon Cranbury too, whisking its leaves and lives along the sidewalk, and dizzily turning, this way and that, the weathercock on the steeple of the First Presbyterian Church.

POOR AMERICA—once so free, so spacious and so youthfully rumbustious, now so cruelly ageing! One by one the anxieties of the Old World fall upon the New, until sometimes, seen by comparison with a rejuvenated Europe, America seems almost worn out. How elderly

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the American comedians look, ploughing through their familiar acts on the television spectaculars! How sedate and responsible the *joie-de-vivre* of America, to a visitor from Chelsea! It did not surprise me to find, after a day or two in the town, that much the biggest thing happening to Cranbury was the advent of Leisure World.

"*Leisure World* . . . what is it?" asks the brochure they gave me. "Once, an idea. Today a dramatic reality that has surpassed the dream . . . a reality that has created a richly rewarding . . . serene and secure way of life for thousands." Leisure World is the staggering brain-child of a Californian called Ross W. Cortese, who one day conceived the idea of building entirely new cities designed specifically for the serenity and security of Senior Citizens—not to any Welfare State pattern, oh dear me no, but equipped with every refinement of Richly Rewarding Living, for which well-heeled elders would pay substantial leasehold fees. He built his first three Leisure Worlds in California, close to home. He built his fourth in Maryland. He is building his fifth a few miles from Cranbury, New Jersey. Cranbury has a population of some 3,500. Leisure World will eventually house 35,000.

You have to be 52 years old to qualify for an apartment ("manor" is the technical expression), and if you are rash enough to marry somebody younger when already in residence, you will be asked to leave. "We cater for Senior Citizens who prefer to share a more gracious and traditional style of living with fellow-citizens of their own tastes and age group." Leisure World is being built in the colonial style, with its own superb club, golf course, swimming pool, village greens, and ecumenical centre ("Religious planning is at the very heartbeat of Leisure World"). It is surrounded by a wall and policed by its own security guards, and there has never been a crime there. Residents are relieved of all the tiresome worries of modern urban life—the rush, the rudeness, the robberies. They may concentrate upon living serenely and traditionally, with square dancing in the splendid ballroom, a ceramics room, a woodworking studio, and not a cemetery in sight.

Heavens, what an arrival, almost at Cranbury's doorstep! 35,000 Senior Citizens, cosseted in the colonial style, with 20 or 30 years of leisure ahead of them, walled about, dishwashered, personally policed, like inhabitants of some gigantic plastic bubble in a glossy dream of posterity! Whatever the Cranbury Housing Associates achieve or provoke, however inexorably Boston and Baltimore close their pincers, Leisure World will loom ever more majestically over these horizons—a city of air-conditioned age, insulated against the young, the wicked, the poor, and by the nature of things the black.

THERE ARE some very entertaining people in Cranbury—always have been—and though as a matter of fact I was quite favourably impressed by Leisure World, and began to wonder if it wouldn't look quite tempting in another thirteen years, at the moment its presence over the railway line is more comic than conclusive. But I see it there now, in my mind's eye, as a kind of Nemesis for Cranbury. Not a very fearful Nemesis indeed, but a proper denouement for an American tale. The Americans have acquired the means of overcoming most of the social evils: poverty, ignorance, lack of opportunity, even ill-health. The fearful problems that gnaw the Great Republic now, and are to be felt naggingly in all the little Cranburys up and down the land, are essentially the problems of unimaginable success.

Thirteen years ago Cranbury was not, I suppose, a very successful little town as American towns go. Its qualities were those of an American failure. It had stuck in a mould rather. Its industry-ratio was low. It was not in a growth-state. Environmentally it was static. Its production-ratio was not meaningful and its wealth-ratio was below the average over-all median. Today it is unquestionably on the go, median income around 7,000 dollars, marching with the Great Society and burgeoning with beautiful home-ratios. It is grappling with Problems. There is Challenge in the air.

Behind lie the simplicities that so beguiled me long ago. Ahead lies Leisure World.

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Gore Vidal

French Letters

The Theory of the New Novel

TO SAY THAT no one now much likes novels is to exaggerate very little. The large public which used to find pleasure in prose fictions prefer movies, television, journalism, and books of "fact." But then Americans, at least, have never been enthusiastic readers. According to Dr. Gallup, half the population will never read a book of any kind, while only five per cent can be regarded as habitual readers. This five per cent is probably a constant minority from generation to generation, despite the fact that at the end of the 19th century there were as many bookstores in the United States as there are today. It is true that novels in paperback often reach a very large audience. But that public is hardly serious, if one is to believe a recent *New York Times* symposium on paperback publishing. Apparently novels sell not according to who wrote them but according to how they are presented, which means that *Boys and Girls Together* will outsell *Pale Fire*, something it did not do in hard-cover. Except for a handful of entertainers like the late Ian Fleming, the mass audience knows nothing of authors. They buy titles, and most of those titles are not of novels but of non-fiction: books about the Kennedys, doctors, and vivid murders are preferred to the work of anyone's imagination no matter how agreeably debased.

In this, if nothing else, the large public resemble the clerks, one of whom, Mr. Norman Podhoretz, observed nine years ago that "a feeling of dissatisfaction and impatience, irritation and boredom with contemporary serious fiction is very widespread," and he made the point that the magazine article is preferred to the novel because the article is useful, specific, relevant—something that most novels are not. This liking for fact may explain why some of our best-known novelists are read with attention only when they comment on literary or social matters. A new novel by Mary McCarthy or William Styron or Norman Mailer—to name at random three celebrated novelists—is apt to be regarded with a certain embarrassment, hostage to a fortune often too crudely gained, and bearing little relation to its author's distinguished commentaries.

An even odder situation exists in the academy. At a time when the works of living writers are used promiscuously as classroom texts, the students themselves do little voluntary reading. "I hate to read," said a Harvard senior to Mr. Lawrence M. Bensky of the Sunday New York *Times*, "and I never buy any paperbacks." Mr. Bensky's report on what is currently being read on campus is not heartening. The undergraduates' dislike of reading novels is partly due to the laborious way in which novels are taught: the slow killing of the work through a close textual analysis. Between the work and the reader falls the explication and, not unnaturally, the explicator is prone to regard the object of analysis as being somehow inferior to the analysis itself.

In fact, according to Mr. Saul Bellow, "Critics and professors have declared themselves the true heirs and successors of the modern classic authors." And so, in order to maintain their usurped dignity, they are given "to redescribing everything downward, blackening the present age and denying creative scope to their contemporaries." Although Mr. Bellow overstates the case, the fact remains that the novel as currently practised does not appeal to the intellectuals any more than it does to the large public, and it may well be that the form will become extinct now that we have entered the age which Professor Marshall McLuhan (this year's obligatory reference) has termed post-Gutenberg. Whether or not the professor's engaging generalities are true (that linear type, for three centuries principal shaper of our thought, has been superseded by electronic devices), it is a fact that the generation now in college is the first to be brought up entirely within the tradition of television and they are significantly different from their predecessors. Quick to learn through sight and sound, today's student often experiences difficulty in reading and writing. Linear type's warm glow, so comforting to Gutenberg man, makes uncomfortably hot his successors. Needless to say, that bright minority which continues the literary culture exists as always, but it is no secret that even they prefer watching movies to reading

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novels. Mr. John Barth ought to interest them more than Antonioni but he doesn't.

FOR THE SERIOUS NOVELIST, however, the loss of the audience should not be disturbing. "I write," declared one of them serenely, "let the reader learn to read." And contrary to Whitman, great audiences are not necessary for the creation of a high literature. The last fifty years have been a particularly good time for poetry in English but even that public which can read intelligently knows very little of what has been done. Ideally, the writer needs no audience other than the few who understand. It is immodest and greedy to want more. Unhappily, by the very nature of his coarse art, the novelist is greedy and immodest; unless he is read by everyone, he cannot delight, instruct, reform, destroy a world he wants, at the least, to be different for his having lived in it. Writers as various as Dickens and Joyce, as George Eliot and Proust, have suffered from this madness. It is the nature of the beast. But at present the beast is caged, confined by old forms that have ceased to attract. Now the question is: can those forms be changed, and the beast set free?

SINCE the Second World War, Alain Robbe-Grillet, Nathalie Sarraute, Michel Butor, Claude Simon, Robert Pinget, among others, have attempted to change not only the form of the novel but the relationship between book and reader, and though their experiments are taken most seriously on the Continent, they are still too little known and thought about in those countries General de Gaulle believes to be largely populated by Anglo-Saxons. Among American commentators, only Miss Susan Sontag[1] has made a sustained effort to understand what the French are doing, and her occasional essays on their work are well worth reading, not only as reflections of an interesting and interested mind but also because she shares with the New Novelists (as they loosely describe themselves) a desire for the novel to become "what it is not in England and America, with rare and unrelated exceptions: a form of art which people with serious and sophisticated [sic] taste in the other arts can take seriously." Certainly Miss Sontag finds nothing adventurous or serious in "the work of the American writers most admired today: for example, Saul Bellow, Norman Mailer, James Baldwin, William Styron, Philip Roth, Bernard Malamud." They are "essentially unconcerned with the problems of the novel as an art form. Their main concern is with their 'subjects.'" And because of this, she finds them "essentially unserious and unambitious." By this criterion, to be serious and ambitious in the novel, the writer must create works of prose comparable to those experiments in painting which have brought us, this season, to Pop and Op-art and in music to the strategic silences of Mr. John Cage. Whether or not these experiments succeed or fail is irrelevant. It is enough, if the artist is serious, to attempt new forms; certainly he must not repeat old ones.

The two chief theorists of the New Novel are Alain Robbe-Grillet and Nathalie Sarraute. As novelists, their works do not much resemble one another or, for that matter, conform to each other's strictures. But it is as theorists not as novelists that they shall concern us here. Of the two, Alain Robbe-Grillet has done the most to explain what he thinks the New Novel is and is not.[2] To begin with, he believes that any attempt at controlling the world by assigning it a meaning (the accepted task of the traditional novelist) is no longer possible. At best meaning was

> an illusory simplification; and far from becoming clearer and clearer because of it, the world has only, little by little, lost all its life. Since it is chiefly in its presence that the world's reality resides, our task is now to create a literature which takes that presence into account.

He then attacks the idea of psychological "depth" as a myth. From Madame de Lafayette to Gide, the novelist's role was to burrow "deeper and deeper to reach some ever more intimate strata." Since then, however, "something" has been "changing totally, definitively in our relations with the universe." Though he does not define that ominous "something," its principal effect is that "we no longer consider the world as our own, our private property, designed according to our needs and readily domesticated." Consequently,

> the novel of characters belongs entirely to the past; it describes a period: and that which marked the apogee of the individual. Perhaps this is not an advance but it is evident that the present period is rather one of administrative numbers. The world's destiny has ceased, for us, to be identified with the rise or fall of certain men, of certain families.

For a Julien Sorel to rise it was necessary to have a name and a face but now we have "renounced the omnipotence of the person" and "the exclusive cult of the 'human' has given way to a larger consciousness, one that is less anthropocentric." In societies where "the intelligibility of the world was not questioned . . . the style of the novel could be innocent." But

[1] Susan Sontag, *Against Interpretation* (London, Eyre & Spottiswoode; New York, Farrar, Straus).
[2] *Snapshots & Towards a New Novel* (London, Calder & Boyars; New York, Grove Press).

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"in the course of the last few years to tell a story has become strictly impossible." Although (he is quick to add) "it is wrong to claim that nothing happens any longer in modern novels." There are still events but, as in Beckett, "they contest themselves, jeopardise themselves. . . .In short, it is not the anecdote that is lacking, it is only its character of certainty, its tranquillity, its innocence."

And so, without character or story (as opposed to the self-obliterating anecdote) or any human depth to be sounded, the novelist must make what he can of the knowledge that "the surface of things has ceased to be for us the mask of their heart" and so the literary language must change, as

> we witness the growing repugnance felt by people of greater awareness for words of a visceral, analogical, or incantatory character. On the other hand, the visual or descriptive adjective, the word that contents itself with measuring, locating, limiting, defining indicates a difficult but most likely direction for a new art of the novel.

Nathalie Sarraute is also concerned with the idea of man the administrative number.[3] She quotes Claude-Edmonde Magny: "Modern man, overwhelmed by mechanical civilisation, is reduced to the triple determinism of hunger, sexuality and social status: Freud, Marx and Pavlov." (Surely in the wrong order.) She, too, rejects the idea of human depth. "The deep uncovered by Proust's analyses had already proved to be nothing but a surface."

Like Robbe-Grillet she sees the modern novel as an evolution from Dostoevsky–Flaubert to Proust-Kafka, and each agrees (in essays written by her in 1947 and by him in 1958) that one of its principal touchstones is Camus' *The Stranger*, a work which she feels "came at the appointed time," when the old psychological novel was bankrupt because, paradoxically, psychology itself, having gone deeper than ever before, "inspired doubts as to the ultimate value of all methods of research. *Homo absurdus*, therefore, was Noah's dove, the messenger of deliverance." Camus' stranger is shown entirely from the inside, "all sentiment or thought whatsoever appears to have been completely abolished." He has been created without psychology or memory; he exists in a perpetual present. Robbe-Grillet goes even further in his analysis:

> It is no exaggeration to claim that it is things quite specifically which ultimately lead this man to crime: the sun, the sea, the brilliant sand, the gleaming knife, the spring among the rocks, the revolver . . . as, of course, among these things, the leading role is taken by Nature.

Only the absolute presence of things can be recorded; certainly the depiction of human character is no longer possible. In fact, Sarraute believes that for both author and reader, character is "the converging point of their mutual distrust," and she makes of Stendhal's, "The genius of suspicion has appeared on the scene," a leitmotiv for an age in which "the reader has grown wary of practically everything. The reason being that for some time now he has been learning too many things and he is unable to forget entirely all he has learned." Perhaps the most vivid thing he has learned (or at least it was vivid when she was writing in 1947) is the fact of genocide in the concentration camps:

> Beyond these furthermost limits to which Kafka did not follow them but to where he had the superhuman courage to precede them, all feeling disappears, even contempt and hatred; there remains only vast, empty stupefaction, definitive total, don't understand.
>
> To remain at the point where he left off, or to attempt to go on from there are equally impossible. Those who live in a world of human beings can only retrace their steps.

The proof that human life can be as perfectly meaningless in the scale of a human society as it is in eternity stunned a generation, and the shock of this knowledge, more than anything else (certainly more than the discoveries of the mental therapists or the new techniques of industrial automation), caused a dislocation of human values which in turn made something like the New Novel inevitable.

Although Nathalie Sarraute and Alain Robbe-Grillet are formidable theorists, neither is entirely free of those rhetorical plangencies the French so often revert to when their best *aperçus* are about to slip the net of logic. Each is very much a part of that French intellectual tradition so wickedly described in *Tristes Tropiques* by Lévi-Strauss:

> First you establish the traditional "two views" of the question. You then put forward a commonsensical justification of the one, only to refute it by the other. Finally, you send them both packing by the use of a third interpretation, in which both the others are shown to be equally unsatisfactory. Certain verbal manoeuvres enable you, that is, to line up the traditional "antitheses" as complementary aspects of a single reality: form and substance, content and container, appearance and reality, essence and existence, continuity and discontinuity and so on. Before long the exercise becomes the merest verbalising, reflection gives place to a kind of

[3] *Tropisms and The Age of Suspicion* (London, Calder & Boyars; New York, Grove Press).

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> superior punning, and the "accomplished philosopher" may be recognised by the ingenuity with which he makes ever-bolder play with assonance, ambiguity, and the use of those words which sound alike and yet bear quite different meanings.

Sarraute is not above this sort of juggling, particularly when she redefines literary categories, maintaining that the traditional novelists are formalists, while the New Novelists, by eschewing old forms, are the true realists because

> their works which seek to break away from all that is prescribed, conventional and dead, to turn towards what is free, sincere and alive will necessarily, sooner or later, become ferments of emancipation and progress.

This fine demagogy does not obscure the fact that she is obsessed with form in a way that the traditional writer seldom is. It is she, not he, who dreams

> of a technique that might succeed in plunging the reader into the stream of those subterranean dreams of which Proust only had time to obtain a rapid aerial view, and concerning which he observed and reproduced nothing but the broad motionless lines. This technique would give the reader the illusion of repeating these actions himself, in a more clearly aware, more orderly, distinct and forceful manner than he can do in life, without their losing that element of indeterminations, of opacity and mystery that one's own actions always have for the one who lives them.

This is perilously close to fine lady-writing (Sarraute is addicted to the triad, particularly of adjectives), but despite all protestations, she is totally absorbed with form and though she dislikes being called a formalist, she can hardly hope to avoid the label since she has set herself the superb task of continuing consciously those prose experiments that made the early part of the 20th century one of the great ages of the novel.

In regard to the modern masters, both Robbe-Grillet and Sarraute remark with a certain wonder that there have been no true heirs to Proust, Joyce, Kafka; the main line of the realistic novel simply resumed as though they had never existed. Yet, as Robbe-Grillet remarks:

> Flaubert wrote the new novel of 1860, Proust the new novel of 1910. The writer must proudly consent to bear his own date, knowing that there are no masterpieces in eternity, but only works in history, and that they have survived only to the degree that they have left the past behind them and heralded the future.

Here, as so often in his theorising, one is offered a sensible statement, followed by a dubious observation about survival (many conventional, even reactionary works have survived nicely), ending with a look-to-the-dawn-of-a-new-age chord, played *fortissimo*. Yet the desire to continue the modern tradition is perfectly valid. And even if the New Novelists do not succeed (in science most experiments fail), they are at least "really serious," as Miss Sontag would say.

There is, however, something very odd about a literary movement so radical in its pronouncements yet so traditional in its references. Both Sarraute and Robbe-Grillet continually relate themselves to great predecessors, giving rise to the suspicion that, like Mr. Bellow's literary usurpers, they are assuming for themselves the accomplishments of Dostoevsky, Flaubert, Proust, Joyce, and even Beckett. In this, at least, they are significantly more modest than their heroes. One cannot imagine the Joyce of *Finnegans Wake* acknowledging a literary debt to anyone or Flaubert admitting—as Robbe-Grillet does—that his work is "merely pursuing a constant evolution of a genre." Curiously enough the writers Robbe-Grillet and Sarraute most resemble wrote books which were described by Arthur Symons for the *Encyclopedia Britannica* as being

> made up of an infinite number of details, set side by side, every detail equally prominent... [the authors] do not search further than the physical basis of life, and they find everything that can be known of that unknown force written visibly upon the sudden faces of little incidents, little expressive moments.... It is their distinction—the finest of their inventions—that, in order to render new sensations, a new vision of things, they invented a new language.

They, of course, are the presently unfashionable brothers Edmond and Jules de Goncourt, whose collaboration ended in 1870.

In attacking the traditional novel, both Robbe-Grillet and Sarraute are on safe ground. Sarraute is particularly effective when she observes that even the least aware of the traditionalists seems "unable to escape a certain feeling of uneasiness as regards dialogue." She remarks upon the self-conscious way in which contemporary writers sprinkle their pages with "he saids" and "she replieds," and she makes gentle fun of Henry Green's hopeful comment that perhaps the novel of the future will be largely composed in dialogue since, as she quotes him, people don't write letters any more: they use the telephone.

But the dialogue-novel does not appeal to her for it brings "the novel dangerously near the domain of the theatre, where it is bound to be in a position of inferiority." On the ground that the nuances of dialogue in the theatre are supplied by actors while in the novel the writer himself must provide, somehow, the sub-con-

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versation which is the true meaning. Opposed to the dialogue-novel is the one of Proustian analysis. She finds much fault with this method (no meaningful depths left to plumb in the wake of Freud), but concedes that "in spite of the rather serious charges that may be brought against analysis, it is difficult to turn from it today without turning one's back on progress."

"Progress," "New Novel," "permanent creation of tomorrow's world," "the discovery of reality will continue only if we abandon outward forms," "general evolution of the genre" . . . again and again one is reminded in reading the manifestos of these two explorers that we are living (one might even say that we are trapped) in the age of science. Sarraute particularly delights in using quasi-scientific references. She refers to her first collection of pieces as "Tropisms." (According to authority, a tropism is "the turning of an organism, or part of one in a particular direction in response to some special external stimulus.") She is also addicted to words like "larval" and "magma," and her analogies are often clinical: "Suspicion, which is by way of destroying the character and the entire outmoded mechanism that guaranteed its force, is one of the morbid reactions by which an organism defends itself and seeks another equilibrium. . . ."

Yet she does not like to be called a "laboratory novelist" any more than she likes to be called a formalist. One wonders why? For it is obvious that both she and Robbe-Grillet see themselves in white smocks working out new formulas for a new fiction. Underlying all their theories is the assumption that if scientists can break the atom with an equation, a dedicated writer ought to be able to find a new form in which to redefine the "unchanging human heart," as Bouvard might have said to Pécuchet. Old formulas having lost their efficacy, the novel, if it is to survive, must become something new and so, to create that something new, they believe that writers must resort to calculated invention and bold experiment.

It is an interesting comment on the age that both Sarraute and Robbe-Grillet take for granted that the highest literature has always been made by self-conscious *avant-gardistes*. Although this was certainly true of Flaubert whose letters show him in the laboratory, agonising over that double genitive which nearly soured the recipe for *Madame Bovary*, and of Joyce who spent a third of his life making a language for the night, Dostoevsky, Conrad, Tolstoy—to name three novelists quite as great —were not much concerned with laboratory experiments. Their interest was in what Miss Sontag calls the "subject," and though it is true that they did not leave the form of the novel as they found it, their art was not the product of calculated experiments with form so much as it was the result of their ability, by virtue of what they were, to transmute the familiar and make it rare. They were men of genius unobsessed by what Goethe once referred to as "an eccentric desire for originality." Or as Mr. Bellow put it, "genius is always, without strain, *avant-garde*. Its departure from tradition is not the result of caprice or of policy but of an inner necessity." Absorbed by his subject, the genius is a natural innovator—a fact which must be maddening to the ordinary writer who, because he is merely ambitious, is forced to approach literature from the outside, hoping by the study of a masterpiece's form and by an analysis of its content to reconstruct the principle of its composition in order that he may create either simulacra or, if he is furiously ambitious, by rearranging the component parts, something "new." This approach from the outside is of course the natural way of the critic and it is significant that the New Novelists tend to blur the boundary between critic and novelist. "Critical preoccupation," writes Robbe-Grillet, "far from sterilising creation, can on the contrary serve it as a driving force."

In the present age the methods of the scientist who deals only in what can be measured, demonstrated, proved, are central. Consequently, anything as unverifiable as a novel is suspect. Or, as Sarraute quotes Jacques Tournier:

> There is nobody left who is willing to admit that he invents. The only thing that matters is the document, which must be precise, dated, proven, authentic. Works of the imagination are banned, because they are invented. . . . The public, in order to believe what it is told, must be convinced that it is not being "taken in." All that counts now is the "true fact."

This may explain why so many contemporary novelists feel they must apologise for effects which seem unduly extravagant or made up ("but that's the way it really happened!"). Nor is it to make a scandal to observe that most "serious" American novels are autobiographies, usually composed to pay off grudges. But then the novelist can hardly be held responsible for the society he reflects. After all, much of the world's reading consists of those weekly news magazines in which actual people are dealt with in fictional terms. It is the spirit of the age to believe that any fact, no matter how suspect, is superior to any imaginative exercise, no matter how true. The result of this attitude has been particularly harrowing in the universities where English departments now do their best to pretend that they are every bit as fact-minded as the physical scientists (to whom the largest

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appropriations go). Doggedly, English teachers do research, publish learned findings, make breakthroughs in F. Scott Fitzgerald, and, in their search for facts, behave as if no work of literature can be called complete until each character has been satisfactorily identified as someone who actually lived and had a history known to the author. It is no wonder that the ambitious writer is tempted to re-create the novel along what he believes to be scientific lines. With admiration, Miss Sontag quotes Mr. William Burroughs:

> I think there's going to be more and more merging of art and science. Scientists are already studying the creative process, and I think that the whole line between art and science will break down and that scientists, I hope, will become more creative and writers more scientific.

LAST YEAR in France the matter of science and the novel was much debated. In an essay called *Nouvelle Critique ou Nouvelle Imposture*, Raymond Picard attacked the new critic Roland Barthes, who promptly defended himself on the ground that a concern with form is only natural since structure precedes creation. Picard then returned to the attack, mocking those writers who pretend to be scientists, pointing out that they

> improperly apply to the literary domain methods which have proved fruitful elsewhere but which here lose their efficiency and rigour.... These critical approaches have a scientific air to them, but the resemblance is pure caricature. The new critics use science roughly as someone ignorant of electricity might use electronics. What they're after is its prestige: in other respects they are at opposite poles to the scientific spirit. Their statements generally sound more like oracles than useful hypotheses: categorical, unverifiable, unilluminating.

Picard is perhaps too harsh but no one can deny that Robbe-Grillet and Nathalie Sarraute often appropriate the language of science without understanding its spirit—for instance, one can verify the law of physics which states that there is no action without reaction, but how to prove the critical assertion that things in themselves are what caused Camus' creature to kill? Yet if to revive a moribund art form writers find it helpful to pretend to be physicists, then one ought not to tease them unduly for donning so solemnly mask and rubber gloves. After all, Count Tolstoy thought he was a philosopher. But pseudo-scientists or original thinkers, neither Robbe-Grillet nor Sarraute finds it easy to put theory into practice. As Robbe-Grillet says, disarmingly: "It is easier to indicate a new form than to follow it without failure." And he must be said to fail a good deal of the time: is there anything more incantatory than the repetition of the word *"lugubre"* in *Last Year at Marienbad*? Or more visceral than the repetition of the killing of the centipede in *Jealousy*? While Sarraute finds that her later essays are "far removed from the conception and composition of my first book" which, nevertheless, she includes in the same volume as the essays, with the somewhat puzzling comment, "that this first book contains *in nuce* all the raw material that I have continued to develop in my later works."

For Robbe-Grillet the problem of the novel is —obviously—the problem of man in relation to his environment, a relationship which he believes has changed radically in the last fifty years. In the past, man attempted to personalise the universe. In prose, this is revealed by metaphor: "majestic peaks," "huddled villages," "pitiless sun"... "these anthropomorphic analogies are repeated too insistently, too coherently not to reveal an entire metaphysical system." And he attacks what he holds to be the humanistic view: "On the pretext that man can achieve only a subjective knowledge of the world, humanism decides to elect man the justification of everything." In fact, he believes that humanists will go so far as to maintain that "it is not enough to show man where he is: it must further be proclaimed that man is everywhere." Quite shrewdly he observes that, "If I say 'the world is man,' I shall always gain absolution; while if I say things are things, and man is only man, I am immediately charged with a crime against humanity."

It is this desire to remove the falsely human from the nature of things that is at the basis of his theory. He is arguing not so much against what Ruskin called the pathetic fallacy, as against our race's tendency to console itself by making human what is plainly non-human. To those who accuse him of trying to de-humanise the novel, he replies that since any book is written by a man "animated by torments and passion," it cannot help but be human. Nevertheless, "suppose the eyes of this man rest on things without indulgence, insistently: he sees them but he refuses to appropriate them." Finally, "man looks at the world but the world does not look back at him, and so, if he rejects communion, he also rejects tragedy." Somewhat inconsistently, he later quotes with admiration Joë Bousquet's "We watch things pass by in order to forget that they are watching us die."

Do those things watch or not? At times Sarraute writes as if she thought they did. Her Tropisms are full of things invested with human response ("the crouched houses standing watch all along the grey streets"), but then she is not so strict as Robbe-Grillet in her apprehension

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of reality. She will accept "those analogies which are limited to the instinctive irresistible nature of the movements . . . produced in us by the presence of others, or by objects from the outside world." For Robbe-Grillet, however, "all analogies are dangerous."

MAN'S CONSCIOUSNESS HAS NOW been separated from his environment. He lives in a perpetual present. He possesses memory but it is not chronological. Therefore the best that the writer can hope to do is to impart a precise sense of man's being in the present. To achieve this immediacy, Sarraute favours "some precise dramatic action shown in slow motion"; a world in which "time was no longer the time of real life but of a hugely amplified present." While Robbe-Grillet, in commenting upon his film *Last Year at Marienbad*, declares:

> The Universe in which the entire film occurs is, characteristically, in a perpetual present which makes all recourse to memory impossible. This is a world without a past, a world which is self-sufficient at every moment and which obliterates itself as it proceeds.

To him, the film is a ninety-minute fact without antecedents. "The only important 'character' is the spectator. In his mind unfolds the whole story which is precisely imagined by him." The verb "imagine" is of course incorrect, while the adverb means nothing. The spectator is *not* imagining the film; he is watching a creation which was made in a precise historic past by a writer, a director, actors, cameramen, etc. Yet the desire for the spectator or reader to involve himself directly and temporally in the act of creation continues to be Robbe-Grillet's goal. He wants "a present which constantly invents itself" with "the reader's creative assistance," participating "in a creation, to invent in his turn the work—and the world—and thus to learn to invent his own life." This is most ambitious. But the ingredients of the formula keep varying. For instance, in praising Raymond Roussel, Robbe-Grillet admires the author's "*investigation* which destroys, in the writing itself, its own object." Elsewhere: "The work must seem necessary but necessary for nothing; its architecture is without use; its strength is untried." And again: "The genuine writer has nothing to say. He has only a way of speaking. He must create a world but starting from nothing, from the dust. . . ." It would not seem to be possible, on the one hand, to invent a world that would cause the reader to "invent his own life" while, on the other hand, the world in question is being destroyed as it is being created. Perhaps he means for the reader to turn to dust, gradually, page by page: not the worst of solutions.

NO DOUBT there are those who regard the contradictions in Robbe-Grillet's critical writing as the point to them—rather in the way that the boredom of certain plays or the incompetence of certain pictures are, we are assured, their achievement. Yet it is worrisome to be told that a man can create a world from nothing when that is the one thing he cannot begin to do simply because, no matter how hard he tries, he cannot dispose of himself. Even if what he writes is no more than nouns and adjectives, who and what he is will subconsciously dictate order. Nothing human is random and it is nonsense to say:

> Art is based on no truth that exists before it; and one may say that it expresses nothing but itself. It creates its own equilibrium and its own meaning. It stands all by itself . . . or else it falls.

Which reminds us of Professor Herzog's plaintive response to the philosophic proposition that modern man at a given moment fell into the quotidian: so where was he standing before the fall? In any case, how can something unique, in Robbe-Grillet's sense, rise or fall or be anything except itself? As for reflecting "no truth that existed before it," this is not possible. The fact that the author is a man "filled with torments and passion" means that all sorts of "truths" are going to occur in the course of the writing. The act of composing prose is a demonstration not only of human will but of a desire to reflect truth—particularly if one's instinct is messianic, and Robbe-Grillet is very much in that tradition. Not only does he want man "to invent his own life" (by reading Robbe-Grillet), but he proposes that today's art is "a way of living in the present world, and of participating in the permanent creation of tomorrow's world." It also seems odd that a theory of the novel which demands total existence in a self-devouring present should be concerned at all with the idea of future time since man exists, demonstrably, only in the present—the future tense is a human conceit, on the order of "majestic peaks." As for the use of the adjective "permanent," one suspects that rhetoric, not thought, forced this unfortunate word from the author's unconscious mind.

The ideal work, according to Robbe-Grillet, is:

> A text both "dense and irreducible"; so perfect that it does not seem "to have been touched," an object so perfect that it would obliterate our tracks. . . . Do we not recognise here the highest ambition of every writer?

Further, the only meaning for the novel is the invention of the world. "In dreams, in memory, as in the sense of sight, our imagination is the

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organising force of our life, of *our* world. Each man, in his turn, must re-invent the things around him." Yet, referring to things, he writes a few pages later:

> They refer to no other world. They are the sign of nothing but themselves. And the only contact man can make with them is to imagine them.

But how is one to be loyal to the actual fact of things if they must be re-invented? Either they are *there* or they are not. In any case, by filtering them through the imagination (re-invention), true objectivity is lost, as he himself admits in a further snarling of his argument: "Objectivity in the ordinary sense of the word—total impersonality of observation—is all too obviously an illusion. But freedom of observation should be possible and yet it is not"—because a "continuous fringe of culture (psychology, ethics, metaphysics, etc.) is added to things, giving them a less alien aspect." But he believes that "humanising" can be kept to a minimum, if we try "to construct a world both more solid and more immediate. Let it be first of all by their presence that objects and gestures establish themselves and let this presence continue to prevail over the subjective." Consequently, the task of the New Novel is nothing less than to seek

> new forms for the novel . . . forms capable of expressing (or of creating) new relations between man and the world, to all those who have determined to invent the novel, in other words, to invent man. Such writers know that the systematic repetition of the forms of the past is not only absurd and futile, but that it can even become harmful: blinding us to our real situation in the world today, it keeps us, ultimately, from constructing the world and man of tomorrow.

With the change of a noun or two, this could easily be the coda of an address on American foreign policy, delivered by Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. to the ADA.

Like Robbe-Grillet, Nathalie Sarraute regards Camus' *The Stranger* as a point of departure. She sees the book's immediate predecessors as "the promising art of the cinema" and "the wholesome simplicity of the new American novel." Incidentally, she is quite amusing when she describes just what the effect of these "wholesome" novels was upon the French during the years immediately after the war.

> By transporting the French reader into a foreign universe in which he had no foothold, lulled his wariness, aroused in him the kind of credulous curiosity that travel books inspire, and gave him a delightful impression of escape into an unknown world.

It is reassuring to learn that these works were not regarded with any great seriousness by the French and that Mr. Horace McCoy was not really the master they once hailed him. Apparently the American novel was simply a vigorous tonic for an old literature gone stale. She is, however, sincerely admiring of Faulkner's ability to involve the reader in his own world. To her the most necessary thing of all is "to dispossess the reader and entice him, at all costs, into the author's territory. To achieve this the device that consists in referring to the leading characters as 'I' constitutes a means." The use of the first person seems to her to be the emblem of modern art. ("Since Impressionism all pictures have been painted in the first person.") And so, just as photography drove painters away from representing nature (ending such ancient arts as that of the miniaturist and the maker of portrait busts), the cinema "garners and perfects what is left it by the novel." The novel must now go where the camera may not follow. In this new country the reader has been aided by such modern writers as Proust and Joyce; they have so awakened his sensibilities that he is now able to respond to what is beneath the interior monologue, that "immense profusion of sensations, images, sentiments, memories, impulses, little larval actions that no inner language can convey." For her, emphasis falls upon what she calls the subconversation, that which is sensed and not said, the hidden counterpoint to the stated theme (obviously a very difficult thing to suggest much less write since "no inner language can convey it").

"Bousquet's universe—ours—is a universe of signs," writes Robbe-Grillet. "Everything in it is a sign; and not the sign of something else, something more perfect, situated out of reach, but a sign of itself, of that reality which asks only to be revealed." This answer to Baudelaire's "The Salon of 1859" is reasonable (although it is anthropomorphic to suggest that reality *asks* to be revealed). Robbe-Grillet is equally reasonable in his desire for things to be shown, as much as possible, as they are.

> In the future universe of the novel, gestures and objects will be there before being *something*; and they will still be there afterwards, hard, unalterably, eternally present, mocking their own "meaning," that meaning which vainly tries to reduce them to the role of precarious tools, etc.

One agrees with him that the integrity of the non-human world should be honoured. But what does he mean (that proscribed verb!) when he says that the objects will be *there*, after meaning has attempted to rape them? Does he mean that they will still exist on the page, in some

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way inviolate in their thing-ness? If he does, surely he is mistaken. What exists on the page is ink; or, if one wishes to give the ink-designs their agreed-upon human meaning, letters have been formed to make words in order to suggest things not present. What is on the page are not real things, but their word-shadows. Yet even if the things were there, it is most unlikely that they would be so human as to "mock their own meaning." In an eerie way Robbe-Grillet's highly rhetorical style has a tendency to destroy his arguments even as he makes them; critically, this complements ideally the self-obliterating anecdote.

On the question of how to establish the separateness, the autonomy of things, Robbe-Grillet and Sarraute part company. In contemplating her method, Sarraute ceases altogether to be "scientific." Instead she alarmingly intones a hymn to words—all words—for they "possess the qualities needed to seize upon, protect and bring out into the open those subterranean movements that are at once impatient and afraid." (Are those subterranean movements really "impatient and afraid"?) For her, words possess suppleness, freedom, iridescent richness of shading and, by their nature, they are protected "from suspicion and from minute examination." (In an age of suspicion to let words off scot-free is an act of singular trust.) Consequently, once words have entered the other person, they swell, explode, and "by virtue of this game of actions and reactions . . . they constitute a most valuable tool for the novelist." Which, as the French say, goes without saying.

But of course words are not at all what she believes they are. All words lie. Or as Frank Kermode put it in "Literary Fiction and Reality": "Words, thoughts, patterns of word and thought, are enemies of truth, if you identify that with what may be had by phenomenological reductions." Nevertheless, Sarraute likes to think that subterranean movements (tropisms) can be captured by words, which might explain why her attitude towards things is so much more conventional than that of Robbe-Grillet who writes:

> Perhaps Kafka's staircases lead *elsewhere*, but they are *there*, and we look at them step by step following the details of the banisters and the risers.

This is untrue. First, we do not look at the staircases; we look at a number of words arranged upon a page by a conscious human intelligence which would like us to consider, among a thousand other things, the fact of those staircases. Since a primary concern of the human mind is cause and effect, the reader is bound to speculate upon why those staircases have been shown him; also since staircases are usually built to connect one man-made level with another, the mind will naturally speculate as to what those two levels are like. Only a far-gone schizophrenic (or an LSD tripper) would find entirely absorbing the description of a banister.

Perhaps the most naïve aspect of Robbe-Grillet's theory of fiction is his assumption that words can ever describe anything with absolute precision. At no point does he acknowledge that words are simply fiat for real things; by their nature, words are imprecise and layered with meanings—the signs of things, not the things themselves. Therefore, even if Robbe-Grillet's goal of achieving a total reality for the world of things was desirable, it would not be possible to do it with language, since the author (that man full of torments and passions) is bound to betray his attitude to the sequence of signs he offers us; he has an "interest" in the matter, or else he would not write. Certainly if he means to re-invent man, then he will want to find a way of defining man through human (yes, psychological) relations as well as through a catalogue of things observed and gestures coolly noted. Wanting to play God, ambition is bound to dictate the order of words, and so the subjective will prevail just as it does in the traditional novel. To follow to its logical terminus Robbe-Grillet's theory, the only sort of book which might be said to be *not* a collection of signs of absent things but the actual things themselves would be a collection of ink, paper, cardboard, glue and typeface, to be assembled or not by the reader-spectator. If this be too heavy a joke, then the ambitious writer must devise a new language which might give the appearance of maintaining the autonomy of things since the words, new-minted, will possess a minimum of associations of a subjective or anthropomorphic sort. No existing language will be of any use to him, unless it be that of the Trobriand Islanders: those happy people have no words for "why" or "because"; for them, things just happen. Needless to say, they do not write novels or speculate on the nature of things.

The philosophic origins of the New Novel can be found (like most things French) in Descartes whose dualism was the reflection of a split between the subjective and the objective, between the irrational and the rational, between the physical and the metaphysical. In the last century Auguste Comte, accepting this dualism, conceived of a logical empiricism which would emphasise the "purely" objective at the expense of the subjective or metaphysical. An optimist who believed in

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human progress, Comte saw history as an evolution towards a better society. For him the age of religion and metaphysics ended with the French Revolution. Since that time the human race was living in what he termed "the age of science," and he was confident that the methods of the positive sciences would enrich and transform human life. At last things were coming into their own. But not until the 20th century did the methods of science entirely overwhelm the arts of the traditional humanists. To the scientific-minded, all things, including human personality, must in time yield their secrets to orderly experiment. Meanwhile, only that which is verifiable is to be taken seriously; emotive meaning must yield to cognitive meaning. Since the opacity of human character has so far defeated all objective attempts at illumination, the New Novelists prefer, as much as possible, to replace the human with objects closely observed and simple gestures noted but not explained.

In many ways, the New Novel appears to be approaching the "pure" state of music. In fact, Miss Sontag looks forward to "a kind of total structuring" of the novel, analogous to music. This is an old dream of the novelist. Nearly half a century ago, Joyce wrote (in a letter to his brother), "Why should not a modern literature be as unsparing and as direct as song?" Why not indeed? And again, why? The answer to the second why is easy enough. In the age of science, the objective is preferred to the subjective. Since human behaviour is notoriously irrational and mysterious it can be demonstrated only in the most impressionistic and unscientific way; it yields few secrets to objective analysis. Mathematics, on the other hand, is rational and verifiable, and music is a form of mathematics. Therefore, if one were to eliminate as much as possible the human from the novel one might, through "a kind of total structuring" come close to the state of mathematics or music—in short, achieve that perfect irreducible artifact Robbe-Grillet dreams of.

THE DATES of Sarraute's essays range from 1947 to 1956, those of Robbe-Grillet from 1955 to 1963. To categorise in the French manner, it might be said that their views are particularly representative of the '50s, a period in which the traditional-minded (among whom they must be counted) still believed it possible to salvage the novel—or anything—by new techniques. With a certain grimness, they experimented. But though some of their books are good (even very good) and some are bad, they did not make a "new" novel, if only because art-forms do not evolve —in literature at least—from the top down. Despite Robbe-Grillet's tendency to self-congratulation ("Although these descriptions—motionless arguments or fragments of scene—have acted on the readers in a satisfactory fashion, the judgment many specialists make of them remains pejorative"), there is not much in what he has so far written that will interest anyone except the specialist. It is, however, a convention of the *avant-garde* that to be in advance of the majority is to be "right." But the New Novelists are not in advance of anyone. Their experiments are based upon the need for experiment and the imposition of certain of the methods of science upon the making of novels. In this they resemble everyone; to have a liking for the new is to be with the dull majority. In the arts, the obviously experimental is almost never denounced *because* it is new: if anything, our taste-makers tend to be altogether too permissive in the presence of what looks to be an experiment, as anyone who reads New York art criticism knows. There is not much likelihood that Robbe-Grillet will be able to re-invent man as a result of his exercises in prose. Rather he himself is in the process of being re-invented (along with the rest of us) by the new world in which we are living.

AT THE MOMENT, advance culture-scouts are reporting with a certain awe that those men and women who were brought up as television-watchers respond, predictably, to pictures that move and talk but not at all to prose fictions; and though fashion might dictate the presence of an occasional irreducible artifact in a room, no one is about to be re-invented by it. Yet the old *avant-garde* continues worriedly to putter with form.

Surveying the literary output for 1965, Miss Sontag found it "hard to think of any one book (in English) that exemplifies in a *central* way the possibilities for enlarging and complicating the forms of prose literature." This desire to "enlarge" and "complicate" the novel has an air of madness to it. Why not minimise and simplify? One suspects that out of desperation she is picking verbs at random. But then, like so many at present, she has a taste for the random. Referring to Mr. William Burroughs' resolutely random work *The Soft Machine*, she writes: "In the end, the voices come together and sound what is, to my mind, the most serious, urgent and original voice in American letters to be heard for many years." It is, however, the point to Mr. Burroughs' method that the voices *don't* come together: he is essentially a sport who is (blessedly) not serious, not urgent, and original only in the sense that no other American writer has been so relentlessly ill-humoured in his send-up of the serious. He is the Grand Guy Grand of American letters. But

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whether or not Miss Sontag is right or wrong in her analyses of specific works and general trends, there is something old-fashioned and touching in her assumption (shared with the New Novelists) that if only we all try hard enough in a "really serious" way, we can come up with the better novel. This attitude reflects not so much the spirit of art as it does that of Detroit, pre-Nader.

No one today can predict what games post-Gutenberg man will want to play. The only certainty is that his mind will work differently from ours; just as ours works differently from that of pre-Gutenberg man, as Miss Frances Yates demonstrated so dramatically in *The Art of Memory*. Perhaps there will be more Happenings in the future. Perhaps the random will take the place of the calculated. Perhaps the ephemeral will be preferred to the permanent: we stop in time, so why should works of art endure? Also, as the shadow of atomic catastrophe continues to fall across our merry games, the ephemeral will necessarily be valued to the extent it gives pleasure in the present and makes no pretence of having a future life. Since nothing will survive the firewind, the ashes of one thing will be very like those of another and so, what matters excellence?

One interesting result of today's passion for the immediate and the casual has been the decline in all the arts of the idea of technical virtuosity as being in any way desirable. The culture (*kitsch* as well as *camp*) enjoys singers who sing no better than the average listener, actors who do not act yet are, in Mr. Andy Warhol's happy phrase, "super-stars," painters whose effects are too easily achieved, writers whose swift flow of words across the page is not submitted to the rigours of grammar or shaped by conscious thought. There is a general Zen-ish sense of why bother? If a natural fall of pebbles can "say" as much as any shaping of paint on canvas or cutting of stone, why go to the trouble of recording what is there for all to see? In any case, if the world should become, as predicted, a village united by an electronic buzzing, our ideas of what is art will seem as curious to those gregarious villagers as the works of what we used to call the Dark Ages appear to us.

REGARDLESS of what games men in the future will want to play, the matter of fiction seems to be closed. Reading skills—as the educationalists say—continue to decline with each new generation. Novel-reading is not a pastime of the young now being educated nor, for that matter, is it a preoccupation of any but a very few of those who came of age in the last warm years of linear type's hegemony. It is possible that fashion may from time to time bring back a book or produce a book which arouses something like general interest (Miss Sontag darkly suspects that "the 19th-century novel has a much better chance for a comeback than verse-drama, the sonnet, or landscape painting"). Yet it is literature itself which seems on the verge of obsolescence and not so much because the new people will prefer watching to reading as because the language in which books are written has become corrupt from misuse.

In fact, Mr. George Steiner believes[4] that there is a definite possibility that "the political inhumanity of the 20th-century and certain elements in the technological mass-society which has followed on the erosion of European bourgeois values have done injury to language. . . ." He even goes so far as to suggest that for now at least silence may be a virtue for the writers—when

> language simply ceases, and the motion of spirit gives no further outward manifestation of its being. The poet enters into silence. Here the word borders not on radiance or music, but on night.

Although Mr. Steiner does not himself take this romantic position ("I am not saying that writers should stop writing. This would be fatuous."), he does propose silence as a proud alternative for those who have lived at the time of Belsen and of Viet Nam, and have witnessed the perversion of so many words by publicists and political clowns. The credibility gap is now an abyss, separating even the most honourable words from their ancient meanings. Fortunately, ways of communication are now changing and though none of us understands exactly what is happening, language is bound to be affected.

But no matter what happens to language, the novel is not apt to be revived by electronics. The portentous theorisings of the New Novelists are of no more use to us than the self-conscious avant-gardism of those who are forever trying to figure out what the next "really serious" thing will be when it is plain that there is not going to be a next serious thing in the novel. Our lovely vulgar and most human art is at an end, if not the end. Yet that is no reason not to want to practise it, or even to read it. In any case, rather like priests who have forgotten the meaning of the prayers they chant, we shall go on for quite a long time talking of books and writing books, pretending all the while not to notice that the church is empty and the parishioners gone elsewhere to attend other gods, perhaps in silence or with new words.

[4] *Language and Silence* (London, Faber; New York, Atheneum Publishers).

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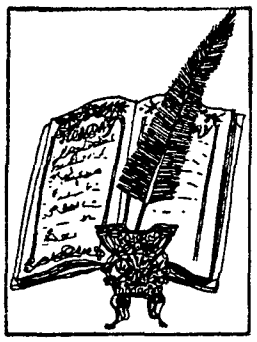

Column

IT WOULD NOW appear, after M. Couve de Murville's shattering intervention, that Britain's application to enter the Common Market is not likely to make appreciable progress for some time to come; indeed, that unless General de Gaulle has a profound change of heart, negotiations with the Six may be prolonged until the Greek kalends. In such a case, of course, mutual recriminations will become intense. On our part, there will be a tendency to put the blame entirely on the General; there will be some who, with a sigh of relief that all danger of success is at last over, will be grateful to him for providing so obvious and unmistakable a scapegoat.

But nothing is ever quite certain in politics and nothing is ever decided for ever. Even if negotiations were to fail now, it would not necessarily mean the end of a united Europe which included Britain; even French generals do not live for ever, though some certainly seem to have the gift of surviving themselves long after they are dead. What is really in question is whether, General or no General, the long-term tendencies, social and political, as well as economic, are such that in the end Britain's entry into Europe is inevitable.

But if this is the case, then we must expect that in the course of years there will also come about a significant change in the consciousness of the British people, which will make entry into Europe not merely a frigid act of calculation but a glad acceptance of the opportunities it offers; that loyalties and attitudes which have hitherto attached themselves exclusively to national institutions will be profoundly modified, so that matters which concern Europe as a whole will come to seem as interesting and important to us as those of our own particular little cabbage patch. Such a change, if it ever comes, would not only show itself in our attitudes to large questions of policy, to which after all most people are splendily indifferent; it would affect, even more perhaps, the ordinary affairs and interests of our daily lives, their pleasures and diversions as well as their anxieties, which are what all of us have most at heart.

To demand such a change, of course, only emphasises how far not only we in Britain, but Frenchmen, Germans, Italians, Belgians, still are from sharing a common European consciousness. The Six have made some advance towards creating one; but as yet it still does not really exist. Germans are not yet as interested in what happens on the banks of the Seine, murders, accidents, scandals, all the *faits divers* which make up our daily newspaper, as if it happened on the banks of the Rhine; an Italian does not read as avidly about a bank robbery in Düsseldorf as if it happened in Milan.

IN THIS SENSE, at least, General de Gaulle may be right when he insists that the real life of a people, its interests, its instinctive sympathies, its elective affinities, is lived within the limits of its national frontiers, and hence that, as of now, the only solid and enduring basis for a United Europe is to be found in the nation-state. For the General, everything else in history is an abstraction and an illusion. Yet in the past, when offered the choice, people have often behaved differently. It was the choice which was offered, for instance, to the United States, and was debated so brilliantly by Hamilton and Madison in the pages of *The Federalist*. As late as 1861 it was possible for so great a man as Robert E. Lee to believe that the interests of the sovereign Commonwealth of Virginia came before those of the United States; but in the end it was the Federalists who were proved right, and precisely because in many Americans a consciousness had arisen which put a "more perfect union" of the states before their sovereignty. I believe that in the long run General de Gaulle will be proved wrong as General Lee was, though we may hope without the same tragic consequences.

What kind of contribution can Britain make to the growth of a European consciousness, still unborn but even now in embryo, which one day will make General de Gaulle's conception of the *Europe des Etats* seem as anachronisic as Jefferson Davis' conception of states' rights? At the moment, it must be confessed, very little, and we remain, it seems to me, hopelessly obsessed with our own insular troubles and frustrations. Paradoxically, at the moment when all three political parties are committed to entering Europe, we appear to be becoming less and less interested in Europe's problems and more and more in our own, while the debate, if it can be called a debate, about the Common Market is confined so rigorously to intricate calculations of profit and loss that any larger vision of what entry into Europe means is effectively excluded. Yet without such a vision we have no right to sign the Treaty of Rome, unless of course we hope to reduce it to the dimensions of a mere trade agreement.

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ONE MIGHT TAKE as an example of the kind of incident in which, as a European, one could hardly fail to be interested, if only the British Press told us anything about it, the gladiatorial contest which is being fought at the moment in Germany between Günter Grass and Axel Springer.

Each of the combatants could claim to be, in his own way, the champ; though their interests are so very different that at moments it seems hard to see how they came to be in the same ring together. Grass is the greatest literary figure in Germany today, with an influence which derives not only from his writings but from his uncompromising commitment to politics. Springer is the head of the greatest newspaper combine in Germany, controlling an estimated 40 per cent of the entire German press, a position which even Lord Thomson might envy but could not claim to rival. These two formidable figures, who provide such a fascinating contrast in the use and abuse of literature, are now joined in furious, one might almost say mortal, combat, of which the issue is still in doubt.

The immediate occasion of the conflict was the publication, by three of Springer's newspapers, of a story that the distinguished Jewish novelist, Arnold Zweig, now 79 and living in East Berlin, had written a letter to a friend in Israel, in which he described life in the German Democratic Republic as a hell, and wished he were back in Haifa. The story clearly endangered Zweig's position in East Germany, but in fact the letter had never been written; the Springer press had derived its information from an obscure news agency in West Berlin which specialises in anti-communist propaganda and had apparently failed to authenticate it. Nor, when the error was discovered, was any apology made to Zweig. Instead, Grass himself apologised, on television. "Since the citizens of our state, including myself, have done nothing to prevent the reign of terror imposed on public opinion, I apologise for myself, knowing that I represent many others, and beg Arnold Zweig, in spite of everything, not to confuse the Federal Republic and West Berlin with the Springer press. . . ."

It may have heightened Grass' indignation that, shortly before, he himself had fallen a victim to the same kind of deception as the Springer newspapers. At the beginning of September, the *Sunday Times* published a manifesto allegedly signed by more than 450 Czech intellectuals, appealing to writers in the west, including Grass, to protest against the restrictions imposed by the Czech government on freedom of thought and speech. Grass responded by writing to President Novotny. "For the benefit of your party and your country, I appeal to you: Grant freedom of thought! This appeal comes from a German writer and Social-Democrat." But in Czechoslovakia, doubt was thrown on the authenticity of the manifesto. The *Sunday Times* refused to reveal the names of the signatories, and when, under pressure, it named one of them, he proved to be a theatrical producer who had himself warned Grass that the manifesto might be a fraud.

BUT IF GRASS, and the *Sunday Times*, were deceived, there was no reason to doubt their motives. In the case of the Zweig letter, the Springer press was publishing a document which, if it had been true, would have exposed Zweig to criminal proceedings under the laws of the Democratic Republic. The object, said Grass, was to create difficulties between him and the state in which he lived of his own free will.

But Grass was not content to confine his attacks on Springer to the case of the Zweig letter; on the *Panorama* programme of German television, he declared it a typical example of the "genuinely Fascist methods" by which Herr Springer and his "servile journalists" circulated stories in the Federal Republic and in West Berlin designed to advance his own political views. Such proceedings, he said, on the part of a man who holds such a dominating position in the German press, constituted a threat to the republic. "It is the duty of the German Press Council, of Parliament, of the Federal Constitutional Court, to intervene against the mounting damage done to parliamentary democracy by the Springer press. But it is also the responsibility of the individual citizen to protest against the deliberate slandering of the writer Arnold Zweig and—since this opportunity at least is open to him—to review his habits as a newspaper reader. We have the press which we deserve." But perhaps, he suggested, Herr Springer's reign may already be on the decline. In the case of the Zweig letter, "the indignant reaction of many West German dailies and weeklies, the spontaneous efforts of the radio and television stations to establish the truth, in spite of everything allow one to hope that the days will soon be over in which the Springer combine could, as an unconstitutional state within a state, offend against the democratic order of the Federal Republic."

I must confess that the spectacle of an individual writer thus challenging a vast newspaper combine fills me with a certain exhilaration. If to English readers Grass' language may sound exaggerated, it should be remembered that in Germany, where everything, even its new-found democracy, is only provisional, the emergence of a semi-monopolistic newspaper concern could in fact have the most alarming consequences,

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and one cannot help admiring Grass' courage and sincerity in saying so. All the more, indeed, because Grass has, predictably, been given the treatment which Springer no doubt thinks he deserves. With all the spontaneity and unanimity of *Daily Express* journalists protecting the memory of Lord Beaverbrook, the Springer newspapers leaped to the defence of their master, primarily by way of discrediting Grass; the magazine *Spiegel*, which is not owned by Springer, took and gave a good deal of malicious pleasure in presenting, under the title "Portrait of a Writer," a series of extracts from the Springer press illustrating the fate prepared for anyone who dares to attack its proprietor. "Poet with a muck rake" says *Bild* of Grass; "Pinko best-seller" says *Welt*; his works are "unappetising," "scandalous," "irresponsible," "infamous." He lies, insults, slanders, falsifies, distorts, incites to violence, is anti-Semitic, conducts red propaganda in "Ulbricht-Chinese." His books are filled with *Grass-Hass*, they are propaganda pamphlets tinged with red, they are blind, neurotic, monstrous, poison-penned, lunatic, acts of terror, inspired by purely prurient and destructive criticism. No wonder Grass, in his letter to President Novotny, should have found it necessary to describe himself modestly as "a German writer and a Social-Democrat."

In such a contest, one would guess that the heavy money would be laid on Springer; the big battalions are all on his side, even though all the talent is on Grass'. Yet in fact Springer is by no means invulnerable. Others beside Grass have wondered how far a vast journalistic empire is compatible with a genuinely free press. Nor is Grass an opponent to be despised. And no one today, especially in Germany, likes to be accused of employing the methods of Fascism, if it can be said with any kind of plausibility; it conjures up too many ugly visions. Even Sir Oswald Mosley would deny such a charge. And in his attack on the Springer press Grass is not without allies. The most spectacular feature of this year's Frankfurt Book Fair was not the launching of some new best-selling masterpiece by a hitherto unknown genius, but processions of students demonstrating against Springer, surrounding his stands and chanting slogans, tearing up copies of *Welt* and the catalogues of his Ullstein publishing house, and carrying placards demanding the confiscation of his properties: *Springer Enteignen!*

But the attack was not only confined to students. In response to a manifesto signed by nearly eighty writers belonging to the radical *Gruppe-47*, six publishers agreed that in future none of their books should be advertised in the Springer press, though they had doubts about subscribing to the last paragraph of the manifesto: "We demand that the Bundestag should establish a statutory body which will guarantee freedom of opinion." Other publishers tried to organise a counter-demonstration, some for not wholly disinterested reasons, without much success; gossip said that Kurt Desch had refused to join the anti-Springer forces because it might lose him one of his best-selling authors, the novelist Hans Habe, a violent opponent of *Gruppe-47*.

All this, of course, may be, from Springer's point of view, only a storm in a literary teacup; but it betrays a genuine and widespread anxiety about the dominating influence he exercised on the German press; it betrays also how sensitive Germans are, because of their past, to suggestions that their press is not genuinely free. At the moment, it is impossible to say how the controversy will end. Three of Springer's editors, feeling that their professional honour has been impugned, and their democratic principles have been brought under suspicion, have now sued Grass for libel. He has replied that the phrase "Fascist methods" as applied to Springer is not an abusive figure of speech. "It is a factual statement, and if it comes to a law-suit I shall bring evidence to prove it."

The case of Grass *contra* Springer certainly throws an interesting light on some corners of literary life, and on the state of public opinion, in the Federal Republic. Whatever conclusion we draw from it, I feel sure that, if we are really to be Europeans, this kind of incident should interest us at least as much as Mr. Brown's social eccentricities at Scarborough or Mr. Wilson's libel action against *The Move*.

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The Spectator as Actor

Addison in Perspective — By PETER GAY

THIS IS NOT Addison's century. Addison's reasonableness strikes us as bland, his civility as genteel, his unfailing cheerfulness as downright fatuous. Forty years ago, Bonamy Dobrée called him "the first Victorian"—no compliment—and nearly everyone has adopted the label and accepted the verdict it implies. Certainly C. S. Lewis, though compelled by his perspicacity to recognise that Addison is neither a solved puzzle nor an open book, accepted it:

> Almost everything which my own generation ignorantly called Victorian, seems to have been expressed by Addison. It is all there in the *Spectator*—the vague religious sensibility, the insistence on what came later to be called Good Form, the playful condescension towards women, the untroubled belief in the beneficence of commerce, the comfortable sense of security which, far from excluding, perhaps renders possible the romantic relish for wildness and solitude. If he is not at present the most hated of our writers, that can only be because he is so little read. Everything the moderns detest, all that they call *smugness, complacency,* and *bourgeois ideology,* is brought together in his work and given its most perfect expression.[1]

We hold it against Addison that he never reached for the heights of sublimity, never probed the depths of despair.

There is much justice in these criticisms. Addison was indeed an amiable patronising champion of "the fair sex"; he was indeed a bland defender of social privilege: women, Mr. Spectator tells his readers, deserve to be well treated, for they can profit from gentle instruction, but it must be conceded that they are flighty creatures, empty-headed, affected, hopelessly addicted to triviality and self-display—and lovable. And the present class structure is right and unalterable:

> Since it is necessary, in the present Constitution of things, that Order and Distinction should be kept up in the World, we should be happy if those who enjoy the upper Stations in it would endeavour to surpass others in Vertue, as much as in Rank, and by their Humanity and Condescention make their Superiority easy and acceptable to those who are beneath them: and if, on the contrary, those who are in meaner Posts of Life, would consider how they may better their Condition hereafter, and by a just Deference and Submission to their Superiors make them happy in those Blessings with which Providence has thought fit to distinguish them.[2]

For a journalist with such views, the Stock Exchange may well serve as a model for civilised intercourse: "There is no place in the Town," Mr. Spectator muses,

> which I so much love to frequent as the *Royal-Exchange*. It gives me a secret Satisfaction, and, in some measure, gratifies my Vanity, as I am an *Englishman*, to see so rich an Assembly of Country-Men and Foreigners consulting together upon the private Business of Mankind, and making this Metropolis a kind of *Emporium* for the whole Earth. I must confess I look upon High-Change to be a great Council, in which all considerable Nations have their Representatives.... As I am a great Lover of Mankind, my heart naturally overflows with Pleasure at the sight of a prosperous and happy Multitude, insomuch that at many publick Solemnities I cannot forbear expressing my Joy with Tears that have stolen down my Cheeks. For this reason I am wonderfully delighted to see such a Body of Men thriving in their own private Fortunes, and at the same time promoting the Publick Stock; or in other Words, raising Estates for their own Families, by bringing into their Country whatever is wanting, and carrying out of it whatever is superfluous.

[1] C. S. Lewis, "Addison," in James L. Clifford, ed., *Eighteenth Century English Literature* (1959).

[2] *The Spectator*, edited with an Introduction and Notes by Donald F. Bond, 5 vols. (1965), No. 219. Oxford University Press, London, 21 gns. the set; O.U.P., New York, $70.60.

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This is scarcely heroic stuff. As C. S. Lewis concludes: Addison is, "above all else, comfortable." What, in our uncomfortable time, makes us more uncomfortable than that?

Emphatically, this is not Addison's century; if we must like an 18th-century figure—it seems like an unwelcome assignment, considering that the 17th century had Hobbes and Pascal, the 19th century, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche—we prefer, to Addison, Jonathan Swift or Samuel Johnson, with their savage indignation, their open-eyed pessimism, their fearless confrontation of the human condition. Still, it is odd: though Swift had his doubts, Johnson admired Addison without embarrassment and without reservations, admired him for his delicacy, his authentic elegance, his wit, admired him above all for his willingness to use his abundant talent in a cause as important as it was just:

> He not only made the proper use of wit himself, but taught it to others; and from his time it has been generally subservient to the cause of reason and of truth. He has dissipated the prejudice that had long connected gaiety with vice, and easiness of manners with laxity of principles. He has restored virtue to its dignity, and taught innocence not to be ashamed. This is an elevation of literary character, *above all Greek, above all Roman fame.* No greater felicity can genius attain than that of having purified intellectual pleasure, separated mirth from indecency, and wit from licentiousness; of having taught a succession of writers to bring elegance and gaiety to the aid of goodness; and, if I may use expressions yet more awful, of having *turned many to righteousness.*" (*Lives of the English Poets*)

This, for Johnson, who chooses his words carefully, is high praise; his judgment introduces a new dimension into the common view of Addison. Dobrée's first Victorian and Johnson's classical moralist hardly seem to be the same man.

IF ANYTHING can reduce the puzzle to its proper proportions—though for its solution we must go outside Addison's writings to the history of his times—it is Donald F. Bond's splendid new edition of *The Spectator,* in which most of Addison's best work appeared. Professor Bond has been at work on this edition for many years, and his achievement, far from disappointing expectations, rewards our patience. We now have—at last—a reliable text securely based on the original papers and fully annotated with the variants Addison and his collaborators introduced into the printed collections of the *Spectator.* In addition, Professor Bond has provided a lengthy and helpful introduction (which settles, among other things, the authorship of some disputed papers), and a host of informative footnotes which identify obscure London characters, little-known plays, insignificant clubs, and hundreds of other important trifles that populate the *Spectator,* and make it such a well-informed, such an eloquent witness to the life of its age.

But, eloquent as it is, the *Spectator* does not speak to us directly; we must know something of its time before we know something of its significance. And that is why we must welcome the opportunity to read the complete *Spectator* once again, and not those interminably reissued selections which concentrate on that lovable Tory eccentric, Sir Roger de Coverley, with his irresistible impulse to sleep in church, and omit so much that is valuable, in fact revolutionary, in Addison's journal.

The *Spectator* dealt with many subjects—that was its formula, and one reason for its success. Sir Roger was part, and an important part, of Addison's world, and so were the *Spectator*'s rather repetitive criticisms of Italian opera or female affectations. But, as the specialist—and, I suspect, only the specialist—knows, Addison's world was wider and more varied than this. The *Spectator*'s most interesting papers are its essays on literary criticism: the essays on wit, the appreciations of the popular ballad "Chevy Chase" and the august poetry of John Milton, and above all the celebration of the Imagination. In these papers, Addison was the radical, subversive of the prevailing rationalism and the dominant academicism of cultivated literary and artistic circles. As Pope's *Essay on Criticism* "belongs to the age and to the past," Professor Clarence Thorpe has argued in a persuasive essay on Addison's literary criticism, Addison's critical essays belong "to the age and to the future. . . . Unlike Pope, Addison's peculiar service to aesthetics and criticism was not to utilise the old—though he did some of that, too—but to accept and adapt and transmit the new, and in such a way and to such a degree that he became thereby one of the chief constructive forces in the literary theory of the century that followed."[3]

Addison, to be sure, was not an inventor; he articulated and extended tendencies already implicit in the scattered writings of his intellectual ancestors. Those tendencies were from rules to freedom, from reliance on objective criteria of beauty (like the theory of proportions) to the subjective appreciation of the work of art, from the academic to the passionate. But while these tendencies had been hidden in treatises or

[3] "Addison's Contribution to Criticism," in R. F. Jones and others, *The Seventeenth Century* (1951).

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debates held in circumscribed circles of professionals, Addison, with his customary elegance, clarity, and good sense, brought the new ideas before a general public of amateurs: while the precise number of *Spectators* sold remains a mystery, it must have been at least 3,000, and each issue had many readers—no daily paper before, and few daily papers after the *Spectator* reached so wide an audience; certainly none influenced so many, and such influential people.

Now this aesthetic radicalism, and this effectiveness, suggest that the modern view of Addison as a bland ideologist of the Establishment must be, if not mistaken, at least incomplete. Indeed, there is nothing new in Professor Bond's claim that Addison, vigorously aided by Steele, "helped to bring about" a "revolution in morals and manners." His contemporaries were certain of it; Samuel Johnson and, almost a century later, Lord Macaulay confirmed it. What Bond's edition does, with its authoritativeness, is to compel us to re-examine these early judgments, to take them seriously. If we do, I suggest, we will come to see Addison, the silent Mr. Spectator, as a leading actor in a great moral drama, and to recognise in Addison, the genteel journalist who wanted nothing more than to please the ladies and amuse the gentlemen, the serious moralist.

BEFORE we can appreciate Addison's important role in the drama of the Western conscience, I must say some obvious things about manners. Today, the word *manners* is applied mainly to ritual polite gestures—to the way one addresses an elderly aunt or helps oneself to dinner; good manners, if they are anything, are a mark of having been to the right school, they are grace notes to conduct pleasing but by no means indispensable. It is no accident that the word *mœurs* should give the modern translator so much trouble: it means what we mean by *manners*, but it means far more than that. In the 18th century, manners were *mœurs*, and manners mattered; they were an essential element holding together a society undergoing rapid change. It was a society in which life was precarious, in which epidemics continued to threaten all segments of the population, in which the streets of the cities were dark, filthy, and unsafe, in which the lower orders were sunk in near-animal torpor and many of the privileged displayed their rank by coarseness and sheer violence. "In the early 18th century," so J. H. Plumb begins the first volume of his *Sir Robert Walpole*, "English politics were influenced by the smallness of the population, by the difficulty of communication and by the prevalence of disease." In such a world, to have manners meant to reduce the amount of violence, to increase the amount of rational intercourse; to "give the wall" while walking in the streets of London, or to call an adversary in debate "Sir," was to avoid physical combat—and more, it was to recognise others as human beings with rights of their own. In Addison's day, then, manners and morals were co-ordinate, allied, almost synonymous terms.[4] To speak about manners, therefore, in the *Spectator* and elsewhere, was to speak about the way one dealt with women and children and social inferiors, the way one conducted one's business or served one's country, the way one behaved and, almost, what one believed in church. In a time when much was new and almost everything was uncertain, a time when a modern civilisation was slowly, painfully arising out of the Christian millennium, men needed guidance in all things, and few things, not even one's taste in dress or in opera, could be dismissed as a triviality. The *Spectator* is a vast miscellany, moving with ease and without plan from attacks on superstitions to attacks on French fashions, from a little sermon on humanity to a serious discussion of Milton, and much of this variety, as I have said, is simply a journalist's stratagem to keep his readers' attention. But it is also symptomatic of the task of the moralist, the critic of manners, in the last years of the Stuart dynasty.

Addison had the wit—I am tempted to say, the genius—to perceive this. He was writing in a time, and in a place, when two intersecting cycles in the history of conscience—one, in Great Britain, short-term and local, the other, in the Christian West, long-term and general—were approaching a critical moment. Civilisation rests on many things, but one thing that is indispensable to it (as we, the heirs of Freud, can no longer doubt) is the internalisation of aggression. As long as all men freely act out their impulses, say what they want, take what they crave, kill whom they hate, and rape whom they desire, there is no civilisation, but the war of all against all, and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short. That is why, from the time of the most primitive tribe, societies have sought to curb impulse and direct it to the service of a larger whole. Agencies of socialisation—domestic training, formal school-

[4] Thus, Addison can write in the *Spectator*: "There are no Authors I am more pleased with than those who show Human Nature in a variety of Views, and describe the several Ages of the World in their different Manners. A Reader cannot be more rationally entertained, than by comparing the Virtues and Vices of his own Times, with those which prevailed in the Times of his Fore-fathers." (No. 209.)

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ing, rites celebrating stages in the life cycle, festivals recalling victories, saints, or heroes—have always been agencies aiding repression. But, as cynics in ancient Rome and 17th-century Europe alike recognised, these attempts to induce individuals to deny free range to their passions have never been adequate, or been adequate only with exceptional individuals: that is why, when Bayle offered the radical suggestion that a society of atheists could live happily and in peace, most of his contemporaries scoffed and Voltaire, a great student of Bayle, amended it to say that such a society could survive only if it were a society of philosophers. Religion, with its threats of hell and bait of heaven, was admittedly an efficacious agency in keeping public order, but the secular arm never could afford to discard the agency of force which repressed by physical compulsion the aggression that had not been successfully repressed by psychological manipulation.

It would be absurd to maintain that Christianity succeeded where other religions had failed: the Middle Ages, even in its most civilised centuries and most civilised centres, was an age of coarseness and irrepressible brutality. But Christianity, especially as it associated itself with the institutions of feudalism, offered some impressive models of obedience, self-abnegation, acceptance of one's role. The master metaphor of medieval life, the hierarchy, assigned to man his proper place in this world and the next, told him precisely where he belonged in his family, in his society, in his profession, in the legal structure, in his relation to religious authority, and even in the solar system. The hierarchy was a model distributing rights and duties; it legitimised the gratification of some impulses and denied the gratification of others. And it was an authoritative model because it rested on religious prescriptions and could call on religious sanctions: God, the apex of the hierarchy, was also its inventor and its guardian.

By the time of Addison, the authority of the hierarchy had been severely shaken. In some unforgettable pages, Burckhardt has pictured the consequences of individual freedom, at once exhilarating and dreadful, in the Italian Renaissance. And elsewhere and later, over and over again, in the realm of politics as much as in the realm of astronomy, degree had been shaken, and while discord had followed, the old order had never been fully restored anywhere. By the 18th century, hierarchies remained as social realities, but their religious authority had been undermined forever. Educated men were for the most part still devout Christians, but their devotion was rational; they were certain that the discoveries of modern science and the criticisms of modern philology must be, and could be, incorporated into a faith that they, as reasonable men, could accept.

This gradual and partial secularisation of life called for new justifications of self-denial, and so, in literature and in political theory, the 17th century developed secular canons for settling the conflicts and determining the respective spheres of reason and passion. The great neoclassical tradition was, among other things, precisely this: a set of rules governing the decorous expression and reasonable control of elemental emotional forces. Denham spoke for this tradition when he voiced his wish to be like the river Thames:

> *Though deep, yet clear; though gentle, yet not dull;*
> *Strong without rage, without o'erflowing full.*[5]

The political theorists of the time were neo-Classicists in their own way; they went back to the Romans of antiquity to restate the theory of sovereignty: man must obey the authority of the state not because he is a member of a tribe, or placed into a cosmic hierarchy, but because he has the legal duty to keep order in the commonwealth.

In England, the struggle to secularise repression had special poignancy. For most Englishmen, the reign of the Puritans had been a trauma: an orgy of gloomy self-abnegation, of fanatical oppression crowned by parricide. The return of Charles II in 1660 thus permitted the explosive expression of long-suppressed grievances, and the defiant, almost ritualistic subversion of the moral rigour which the Puritans had imposed upon the country. The immorality of Restoration society has been greatly exaggerated;[6] the court wits and titled rakes made up a small, if conspicuously brilliant segment of English society, and even they, for all their exhibitionism, turn out on historical scrutiny to have been rather less vicious and less immoral than gossip made them out to be. Still it is true that in the court of Charles II, and therefore among the fashionable, wit and morality were long regarded as antithetical, manner—not manners—was separated from content. Yet, as

[5] The import of these lines has been noted by Louis I. Bredvold, *The Literature of the Restoration and the Eighteenth Century, 1660–1789* (ed. 1962).

[6] So has the dour "Puritanism" of the Puritans; but I am dealing here not with the historical reality as we reconstruct it, but with the reality as it was perceived then.

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Joseph Wood Krutch said long ago, "The orgy of dissipation into which the ruling class plunged after the Restoration could not possibly last. England was not, like the Roman Empire, decadent and hence destined to wear itself out and die." Thus, "as the effects of the reaction passed, English moderation naturally reasserted itself."[7] Some of this reassertion, to be sure, took rather immoderate forms: in particular the attempts to purge the stage seemed ready to discard the wit with the immorality. Yet, whatever the excesses of the moderates, their historical role was plain enough: it was part of a long, difficult, subtle process of creating a new civilisation. Most men continued to evoke God and the Church, but more and more, whether in discussions of the theatre or the family, new words began to make themselves heard: reason, experience, humanity. Dedicating a book to his wife—itself a remarkable sign of the new manners—Steele fondly wrote:

> That I think them [his children] preferable to all other children, I know, is the effect of passion and instinct. That I believe you the best of wives, I know proceeds from experience and reason.[8]

The time to moralise wit was at hand.

THE *Spectator*'s share in constructing the tradition of modern civility was considerable, but its precise measurement must remain uncertain. Students of literature are apt to overestimate the effect of the written word in society: it is often less a cause of social change than an expression of social change already under way. Surely Addison's journal was such a success because a wide public was ready to applaud, and perhaps to apply, its ethical teachings. Yet there is abundant evidence that the *Spectator* made its readers more aware of themselves than they had been before, that its gentle ridicule encouraged many to reform conduct, or discard opinions, that made them vaguely uneasy before. Professor Bond quotes the diary entry of young Dudley Ryder, who later became a distinguished judge:

> Read the 38th *Spectator,* was extremely pleased because I felt everything I read [in] it was designed against the fault that I find myself extremely guilty of, and that is a too great desire and love of applause in things which are in themselves the least commendable. I have continually a desire of pleasing in my eye and this gives birth and life to every pursuit or engagement, whatever I do carries an air of affectation along with it.

There were many like Dudley Ryder, uncomfortable with their ways, uncertain of what the right way was, and thus "extremely pleased" to be so wittily seduced into virtue.

It is in this light, I think, the light of history, that we must read the *Spectator*. Its tone (which often seems insipid), its attacks on affectation, or petty superstitions, or Italian opera (which hardly seem worth troubling with), were parts of a great campaign on behalf of civilisation, appropriate to its own time if not to ours.[9] Addison's moderation—his deliberate avoidance of wounding personal allusions, his lighthearted mockery—was itself didactic, designed to teach civility by example. Mr. Spectator was demonstrating to his public that one could ridicule absurdities and oppose vice without retailing libels or using vicious language, that one could praise virtue without indulging in embarrassing rhapsodies. Besides, Addison's tone cast an air of reasonableness over all of Mr. Spectator's favourite causes; if Addison and his associates were ahead of the general public, they made sure they were no more than one step ahead, for they saw little point in persuading a mere handful of philosophers (who were in any event already persuaded) and leaving the wider public baffled or bored. "It was said of *Socrates*," Addison observed quite early in the *Spectator,* "that he brought Philosophy down from Heaven, to inhabit among Men; and I shall be ambitious to have it said of me, that I have brought Philosophy out of Closets and Libraries, Schools and Colleges, to dwell in Clubs and Assemblies, at Tea-Tables, and in Coffee-Houses." No commentator has expressed the *Spectator*'s social programme more forcefully and more clearly than this: the time to diffuse the blessings of civilisation was now.

MR. SPECTATOR'S TEARS at the sight of merchants in pacific assembly, therefore, calls not for the acid of the satirist but the understanding of the historian. Addison's was a coarse age, and, as Hogarth's work testifies, coarseness survived Addison's most strenuous efforts. But the way from coarseness to civility was open. To ridicule superstitions was to lend prestige to the scientific mode of thinking. To treat women with affection and to urge that they be raised by degrees to full human status was to offer a radical proposal; condescension is better than

[7] *Comedy and Conscience after the Restoration* (1924).

[8] Calhoun Winton, *Captain Steele: The Early Career of Richard Steele* (1964).

[9] Though, given the beastliness, the shallow religiosity, the cant and brutality of our century, I'm not sure that we should feel above the need for Addison's moralising.

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brutality. To romanticise the Stock Exchange was to assist in the burial of aristocratic martial values that had dominated European life for so long and served it so badly; Addison was not a Philistine, but he preferred a peaceful merchant to a brawny hero, a greedy shopkeeper to a stupid general. "There are not more useful Members in a Commonwealth," Addison wrote, "than Merchants. They knit Mankind together in a mutual Intercourse of good Offices, distribute the Gifts of Nature, find work for the Poor, add wealth to the Rich, and Magnificence to the Great." I need not demonstrate that this is a sentimental view of merchants, a fine specimen of what C. S. Lewis had already noted in Addison—bourgeois ideology. If we were to take it literally, we would have on our hands a hero only slightly less repulsive than, and perhaps as destructive as his aristocratic predecessor. But there is good evidence that we need not so take him, and some of this evidence comes, strikingly enough, from a passage not in Addison, but in Voltaire. In the late 1720s, the decade after Addison's death, Voltaire lived in England for more than two years, learned English, steeped himself in English culture, and turned incurable Anglomaniac. He admired the "illustrious M. Addison," and obviously knew the *Spectator,* for in his celebrated report on England, the *Lettres philosophiques,* there appears this paragraph:

> Enter the London stock exchange, that place more respectable than many a court. You will see the deputies of all nations gathered there for the service of mankind. There the Jew, the Mohammedan, and the Christian deal with each other as if they were of the same religion, and give the name of infidel only to those who go bankrupt; there, the Presbyterian trusts the Anabaptist, and the Anglican accepts the Quaker's affirmation. On leaving these peaceful and free assemblies, some go to the synagogue, others go to drink; this one goes to have himself baptised in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; that one has his son's foreskin cut off and Hebrew words mumbled over the child which he does not understand; others go to their church to await the inspiration of God, their hats on their heads, and all are content.[10]

Here Voltaire fully develops the cultural implications of Addison's sentimental report: the stock exchange becomes an extended metaphor for a rational, pacific, secular civilisation which encourages diversity, protects dissent, chooses profit over bloodshed, and celebrates traders instead of heroes. We have had enough heroics in our day to recognise that Voltaire's—and Addison's—choice was eminently sensible.

ADDISON'S MORAL PREACHING then, like his literary criticism, was an attempt to find the proper place for passion and to find that place by appealing not to some higher authority, or to caprice, but to a reasonable consideration of the evidence at hand. In the end, what allows us to patronise Addison is that he did what he did so well: "I sometimes wonder," even the critical C. S. Lewis was moved to ruminate, "whether the very degree of their success does not conceal from us the greatness of the undertaking." Precisely. We patronise Addison at the peril of surrendering our historical perspective.

[10] *Lettres philosophiques,* No. VI. The resemblance of this famous passage to Addison's paper emerges even more clearly when Addison's *Spectator* No. 69 is read in full. During his stay in England, as his English notebooks show, Voltaire tried at least two versions of this metaphor. See my *Voltaire's Politics: The Poet as Realist* (1959), pp. 53–54.

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FILM

Buster Keaton

By Eric Rhode

In September 1965, five months before his death, Buster Keaton was guest of honour at the Venice Film Festival. The audience gave him a five-minute standing ovation. He was the solo performer in Samuel Beckett's *Film*. Interviews appeared everywhere, and everyone wanted to employ him. After thirty years of near-neglect Buster had become the darling of the cinephiles. But how had this come about? And why? The answer isn't simple.

In fact, as Dilys Powell points out in her introduction to the autobiography,[1] he didn't entirely disappear after the coming of sound. He continued to work as a gag-man, and made some films and two-reeler comedies better forgotten.

> But for his devotees in England there were years when he seemed to have vanished altogether. We still talked about him; recalled taking a taxi half-way across Paris to see *Our Hospitality*; insisted that *The General* was still the best comedy ever made. He was in fact missed rather than forgotten. Few film stars have been missed so much and for so long.

His come-back was gradual. In 1947 he had a great success as top of the bill at the Cirque Médrano. In the early '50s he appeared briefly, and compellingly, in *Sunset Boulevard* and *Limelight*, and there was a growing demand for him on American television. Most of his earlier work, it seemed, was destroyed. Then in 1955 James Mason came across a secret storage vault behind the private projection room of his Hollywood mansion—formerly Keaton's home—and found an almost complete collection of his films. Many of these were shown at a Venice retrospective two years before the ovation. Since then a private company has bought up the stock. Some of it will be screened in the New Year at London's National Film Theatre.

Yet the question lingers of why he was taken up in this way. Is there something in the modern sensibility that finds him especially sympathetic? And is it no more than a coincidence that the rediscovery of Keaton should take place at a time when Chaplin's reputation is being questioned? In a broadcast David Sylvester said of Chaplin (and I paraphrase): "There is something narcissistic about him which makes him less a truly great clown than Keaton. He wants to win us, the audience, which makes his human relationships within the film less committed. A good example of this is the famous waiting scene in *The Gold Rush*. Our sympathy is so completely on his side, he's in a way so little ridiculous, that it's almost as if he no longer needed the girl because he has won us. We displace the girl. We become the lover.... Altogether, the Charlie figure is not unlike The Kid, or like a child in an orphanage nursery who has to compete with the others to be more charming—in contrast to Buster Keaton who is the small boy who wants to do as well as his dad, except that he keeps on tripping up."[2]

Chaplin never really escaped from the music-hall tradition in which you wink at the audience as you trip your stooge. His sets and lighting remain those of the stage and look ugly on

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[1] *My Wonderful World of Slapstick*. By Buster Keaton, with Charles Samuels. Allen & Unwin, 30s.

[2] See also Colin MacInnes: "To be entirely frank, I find the Chaplin "little man" figure, despite the brilliance of so many of his comic effects, to be emotionally repellent.... This I would say even of the early silent films, in which Keaton seems to me to be altogether superior; far more astringent and poetic, and not, as seems the case with Chaplin, consciously pathetic." *Sweet Saturday Night* (1967).

But for the view of an older generation: "He was England's gift to the world in this age, likely to be remembered when her writers, statesmen, and scientists are forgotten, as timeless as Shakespeare and as great." A. J. P. Taylor, *English History, 1914-45*.

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film. His set-ups are dullishly flat, as though the camera had been placed in the front row of the stalls, his editing perfunctory. In contrast, Keaton subordinates everything to the *mise-en-scène* and thinks first and foremost in terms of the total effect. He was probably the first comic to escape from the tyranny of the gag and to conceive of humour as arising from plot and from the play of character and environment.

YET HIS TALENT is visual and entirely cinematic. No one studied *The Birth of a Nation* to better advantage. When asked why *The General* gave a more convincing picture of the Civil War than *Gone with the Wind*, Keaton replied, "Well, you see, they based their film on the novel. I went back to the history books." This research was never pedantic. Keaton sought to understand the past as D. W. Griffith had done. He sought to create a mood, an ambience, a credible world in which imagination could find release. His choice of location, and of light and shade, is often ravishing, yet it is always in key with the action and in harmony with Keaton himself.

> The face was beautiful, [writes Miss Powell], long, melancholy, the cheeks faintly hollowed: a face from a Victorian album. The body was an acrobat's body with an acrobat's tight elegance. The face was a gift from heaven: training in the remorseless school of knockabout vaudeville had sharpened and strengthened the body's natural talents.

It would be false to speak of him as giving a performance. He is totally absorbed in his role, in his character, in whatever he is doing. When he is in love it becomes desperately important that he should win the girl. She is not there to relieve his vanity, or to show what a good guy he is. And because he genuinely cares for her, he doesn't treat her like a porcelain goddess. When Annabelle in *The General* makes a fool of herself by trying to fuel the engine with what appears to be a toothpick, the Engineer (Keaton) shakes her by the neck, then swiftly kisses her on the mouth. Such behaviour looks gentle when compared to the famous scene in *Public Enemy* (1931), in which James Cagney slapped Mae Clarke with a grapefruit, but at the time it was considered startlingly rough.

Keaton is so immersed in his activities that he encourages us to be more interested in them than in him. He is often faced by extraordinary, even zany problems; yet he doesn't seek to highlight their absurdity by calling attention to himself—by collapsing in wild panic, say, or by larking, or by behaving illogically. Instead he often follows a Wonderland logic with an imaginative solution that is comparable in its poetry to the problem. As the aristocratic millionaire in *The Navigator*, Rollo Treadway, he's considered a sap by some of his friends; but Rollo is only unresourceful because he is cossetted and untried. When a trial does come —he finds himself stranded alone with his girl on a drifting liner —he rises splendidly to the challenge.

ON OCCASION his lack of experience shows him to be more a Man Friday than a Robinson Crusoe: by the time he has finished opening a can of meat he has hatcheted it to pulp. Yet this sort of clumsiness is rare. Usually his perplexities might be ours, as when he tries to boil two eggs in a gigantic pan made to boil two hundred. At first he fumbles, breaks eggs, and

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burns his hand but, unlike us perhaps, refuses to admit defeat. Typically, the kitchen is not rearranged to suit his needs; order is established with a wizardry that respects the situation. Thus Rollo doesn't discard the gigantic pan for a smaller one; he learns to remove the eggs by the claw of two spoons attached to an elaborate system of ropes-and-pulleys. Cans of meat are opened by a handsaw gently set in motion by the two stone wheels of a corn-grinder, operated by a foot-pedal. The Robinson we think of is less Crusoe than Heath.

The liner is huge, and the kitchen might have been built for two voracious giants; yet Keaton doesn't feel persecuted by it. In one scene Rollo and his girl think there are ghosts on board—a piratical portrait swings accidentally in front of a porthole, a door bangs into a gramophone and sets off a record of *Alone on the Deep*—but by being shown the sources of their fear beforehand, we are reassured by the humour. Machines and objects are never experienced as menacing, as they are in Chaplin's *Modern Times*.

Chaplin's mistrust of machines appears to ask for, and is sometimes given, a political reading; and it is assumed, because he is persecuted by employers and their methods of employment, that he is identified with the proletariat. But if this reading is intended, then Charlie is something of a cheat, for he takes on the prestige of the working man without his responsibilities, invites complicity as the underdog, yet remains the tramp who escapes from the grinding routines of factory life. Moreover, the way in which he tricks yobs and bullies is also politically unreal, since he uses tyrannical methods in dealing with his tyrants, and neither bargains with them nor takes part in co-operative planning for strike action or for revolution. In fact he has no social commitment; his supposed identification with the proletariat is often a cover for sly, cruel behaviour. If he is identified with anyone it is with those anti-social beings, the con-man and the social climber. He is a frisky variant on Uriah Heep.

THE KIND OF PARTS played by Keaton don't encourage this sort of misapprehension. The Keaton character is usually someone who tries to make the most of the existing situation by accepting it and by working within its own terms. At the same time he is not a go-getter and conformist like Harold Lloyd's All-American boy who uses machines purely to further his own interests, never to enjoy or demonstrate their beauty. Buster never aims to be the self-sufficient master of his world. As David Sylvester implies, this child is happy to continue playing under his father's supervision.

The things which give him most pleasure belong to the America of a former generation. Yet his wooden penny-farthings and puffing billies are no more separated from the rural landscape and from other people than is Buster himself. Indeed they enchant us because they are related to this completeness, to a totality that never encloses us, never oppresses, because it refers to standards, ideals, and imaginative qualities that go beyond the needs of the audience. Keaton used to reshoot scenes after a preview if the gags misfired; even so, he hardly invites complicity with us, the other children in the nursery. His craft—to develop Sylvester's analogy—is to be judged by his internal father alone. It allows him an irony we don't find in Chaplin, allows him even to make fun of his own earnestness. In *The General* he is so busy chopping up wood on the fuel carriage that he fails to notice the Southern Cavalry behind him fleeing in the other direction.

HIS SERVICE to other masters than ourselves usually takes the form of a test: a problem to be solved, a girl to be won. It calls for a behaviour which has something of the frontiersman about it—hopeful, yet realistic in planning and tough. The world Keaton shows may be violent, baffling, and obdurate, but there is nothing in it that can destroy the brave man, no excuse for defeatism. Keaton did his best to guarantee the value of this belief by not cheating over his gags. "It's got to be so authentic that it hurts," he said of *The General*, and his motto, so far as his gags were concerned, was "Make it for real." Often he risked his life. In the cyclone episode in *Steamboat Bill Jnr* he was just saved by a window when the side of a house fell on him:

> The clearance of that window was exactly three inches over my head and past each shoulder. And the front of that building—I'm not kidding—weighed two tons. It had to be built heavy and rigid in order not to bend and twist in that wind. The whole gang except Gabe fought me on that one. My director, Chuck Reisner, stayed in his tent reading *Science and Health*. First time I saw cameramen look the other way. But Gabouri and I had figured out the details. We knew it would work.

Keaton could have been a popular star without these risks, and he could have made successful films without taking the care he did to make them so beautiful to look at, and so graceful. The fact that he is in service to other masters than ourselves may give his work and his performances an appearance of detachment (which we might wrongly take to be aloofness). Yet it is in this merging of beauty and detachment

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that his work most approaches the manner of such contemporary masters as Antonioni and Bresson.

The comparison with Bresson, especially, may be thought of as eccentric. But it is a parallel worth exploring. Both Keaton and Bresson are concerned with "the real," and with notions of the test and the oddity of fate. Both of them are concerned with individuals who are intensely involved with objects; with few changes, the prison escape in *Un homme condamné à mort s'est échappé* could have been a Keaton theme. And the impassivity of Bresson's heroes is close to Buster's underplaying.[3] Where they differ, of course, is that Bresson's transcendentalism removes his films from the realms of intentional humour, though they may at times edge towards the ridiculous. Yet Keaton's aristocrats and Southerners—choices of roles unusual for a comic—do have something unworldly about them, and we don't have to push hard to see them as being similar to young Galahads in search of the Grail.

WHATEVER THE WORTH of this comparison, I've no doubt that Keaton is comparable to the most serious artists of the cinema. Yet how did this come about?

> I was so successful as a child performer that it occurred to no one to ask me if there was something else I'd like to do when I grew up. If someone had asked me I would have said, "Civil Engineer." I imagine I would have been a good one. But even fifty years ago you could not qualify for a degree with a one-day school education. That's all I ever had: one day in school.

What then were the influences that give direction to this subtle, refined talent? Keaton's autobiography and Rudi Blesh's effusive yet utterly fascinating Life and Times gives us some other idea.[4]

"My birth in Pickway, Kansas, on 4 October 1895, was comparatively uneventful, though Pickway itself soon afterwards was blown away during a cyclone." Cyclones—so legend has it—dogged Keaton. When he was almost three years old a cyclone lifted him out of a second-floor window and carried him in a vacuum over trees and houses before lowering him gently into a deserted street. On the same day he caught a finger in the cogs of a clothes-wringer and gashed his right eye by throwing a stone that rebounded off a peach tree. The gash was stitched up, the finger cut off, and Keaton seemed unperturbed. This, and other forms of catastrophe, made a suitable preparation for the extreme rough-and-tumble of his parents' act. (The family were accident-prone: trains usually crashed when they travelled by rail, and their presence in a boarding-house was signal enough for the place to burst in flames.)

Keaton's parents toured the country as a comedy turn, in medicine shows and vaudeville. They brought Buster into the act as soon as he could walk. A suit-case handle was sewn to the back of his jacket so that his father, after kicking him about, could throw him through scenery. (The act had to be toned down when it was brought to London.) On one occasion an obstreperous man from Yale heckled Keaton's mother—who, during the fracas, used to stand alone downstage playing the saxophone—and Keaton's father hurtled his son over the orchestra pit into the stalls. The child managed to propel his feet in such a way as to smash some of the Yale man's ribs and to knock out his companion.

He doesn't appear to have complained at being treated like a handball and was, if anything, appreciative. He was devoted to his good-natured father—they were a remarkably genial family—and he was happy, even proud, to share in the triumphs and tribulations of stage life. He was already a professional. He soon learnt that audiences were more amused if he did not smile when beaten, or when he tried to parody his father. He quickly mastered the art of stage falls—and he was a natural comic. By the age of five he had become a prodigious draw at the box-office. Blesh marshals evidence to show that many people considered him to be "the most celebrated comedian in America." (Some took him to be a midget.) He would stand at the stage-door handing out, not autographs, but candy.

He had begun to contribute gags to the act, and his powers of invention must have been further stimulated by the extraordinary atmosphere in which they lived. Blesh describes vividly the world of vaudeville at the turn of the century: the jugglers, freaks, magicians—and such wonders as the beautiful Adgie and her lions, the boy hypnotist Professor Fraley, Colonel Gaston Bordeverry ("a rifle genius who played *Comin' Through the Rye* by directing his bullets at the bull's-eye of a weird piano"), the robot Enigmarelle and, amongst many others, La Belle Titcomb.

> La Belle Titcomb, though as fantastic as Enigmarelle, was very definitely not sheet tin but flesh and blood. She called herself *Equestrienne Extraordinaire* and performed against an alpine

[3] In fact, Buster's face is not as deadpan as many of his admirers have supposed. He never voluntarily smiled maybe, but otherwise he had a full and subtle range of expressions. Nowadays the actors who played with him appear hammy; but in the 1920s they probably looked natural while he seemed expressionless—and this could be the basis of the deadpan myth.

[4] *Keaton*. By RUDI BLESH. Secker & Warburg, 55s.

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set. With accompanying thunder-and-lightning effects, she stood on the back of a live white stallion and yodelled the *Ride of the Valkyries*. Then in a fine surrealist fantasy of sex and patriotism, a lantern-slide projected the American flag on her white robes as she did a Beef Trust shimmy to make Old Glory wave and sang to her horse—with cheerful disregard of his obvious sex, *Gee, You Are a Grand Little Girl*.... The famous tramp comedian, Harry Wills, married La Belle Titcomb. After a year he abruptly left her and gave out a statement to the press: "I should have married the horse."

A DEEPER INFLUENCE, perhaps, was his godfather and parents' closest friend, the escapologist Harry Houdini, who applied to him the sobriquet *Buster* when, at the age of six months —five months, that is, before he was accidentally closed into a stage trunk—the indestructible infant tumbled down a flight of stairs. ("That's some buster your baby took.") Houdini taught Keaton some of the secrets of his craft—secrets which Keaton never revealed and which, through Houdini's example, may have given him confidence to believe that no problem was insoluble, no prison inescapable.

Yet this vaudeville past—the hardness of its life, and the decency and grace of many of its performers—can act as no more than a series of suggestive images, a background to a picture we have already formed, from his movies, of Keaton and his art. The disciplines and exoticism of vaudeville gave shape to his imagination, but we cannot use them to explain the quality of his talent. Maybe his athletic skill, his physical integrity, strengthened his instinct for form, whether it was for the construction of gags, or plots, or of eccentric, beautifully poised machines. Yet the workings of the temperament that motivated the formal perfection of *The General*—a temperament that combined a richness of invention with refinement—remains a mystery.

WHAT WE MAY BEGIN to understand, though, is why he was unable to adjust to the emerging business organisation of Hollywood at the end of the 1920s. Formerly, Keaton had always worked with Joseph Schenk as producer; and sensible, amiable Joe had given him a free hand. But now Schenk was forced to desert him and Keaton, unlike Chaplin, lacked the shrewdness to survive as an independent. He could only work well under the aegis of a good paternal figure, and he was unable to fight the tycoons who thought they knew best how to make comedies.

Many film careers came to an end or to a virtual standstill at that time, but few so terribly as Keaton's did. His dipsomania and collapse make painful reading. His first wife, the lovely Natalie Talmadge, divorced him. He was confined to various sanatoria, and on one occasion was tied into a strait-jacket from which, remembering Houdini's advice, he was able to make an escape. But he was unable to escape from a nurse in one of these places, who arranged to marry him while he was half-drugged, and who stayed with him for a year. Later he married for a third time, and happily; and much later still had the satisfaction of acclaim and of knowing that his films would not be forgotten. But we cannot wish away the fact that he had been permanently damaged, and that much in the indestructible child had been destroyed.

Like a Stone

When not asleep I could hear the air's faint humming,
The unmown grass was cool to the limbs, the sun
Was a glow beyond the walls of the eye's red womb.

I heard your approach, a light swishing of grass.
Blue-grey was the glaring world to my opened eyes,
And there was your outstretched arm, unwavering, pale,
And unblemished hand holding the russet fruit
So sternly towards me, with not a word, and your eyes
As I'd never seen them before. My will was yours.

In gratuitousness your action wanted nothing.
Can a man not be left to drowse in the sun on his own?
That was a place where I could have lain for ever,
Like a cat, like a lizard, like a stone.

Daniel Huws

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SCIENCE

The Men With Long Eyes

Astronomical Revolution — By GORDON RATTRAY TAYLOR

ON A SEVEN-THOUSAND-FOOT range of mountains rising abruptly from the plains of Arizona can be seen two aluminium domes and a slanting white structure which looks like no other building on earth. The domes are the homes of astronomical telescopes—one at work; the other, which will be the world's second largest, should be ready in 1969. The white structure is an immovable telescope designed solely to observe the sun—the heat of its rays makes the air in the telescope waver and necessitates refrigeration. This is the United States' new National Observatory at Kitt Peak. It is operated by nine universities jointly under the title Association of Universities for Research in Astronomy (AURA) but the Indians of the surrounding Plains call the astronomers of Kitt Peak simply "the men with the long eyes."

This multi-million dollar undertaking is one of the first visible signs of the extraordinary renaissance which is taking place in astronomy at the present time. Both at the intellectual level and now in terms of hardware, astronomy is becoming one of the great areas of scientific advance in our time. If biology can be designated the breakthrough area of the first part of the twentieth century, astronomy looks like being the breakthrough area of the second half. To most laymen, astronomers are a priest-like caste of old men who spend all night peering up long tubes and occasionally noting events which are about as far removed from practical relevance as it is possible to get. The making of star-catalogues of stunning length is, so they imagine, about as urgent as making collections of stamps or butterflies and has the same stamp of fusty, Victorian hobbies for gentlefolk. None of this is even remotely descriptive of astronomy today. Just as other sciences, such as biology, have passed from a descriptive phase, in which there was a massive accumulation of observations but not much theory to explain them, into a dynamic phase in which real insight into process suddenly bloomed, so now in astronomy. Man's new knowledge of the structure of the atom has made it possible to understand the processes by which stars generate their light and heat by burning hydrogen, and so has clarified the relationships between stars of different kinds—blue and red, large and small, bright and dim—showing them to be at various points in their life-histories. And from studying the evolution of stars, the astrophysicist can proceed to studying the evolution of entire galaxies. The modern astronomer spends more hours at his desk studying spectrographic comparison data than he ever does at a telescope. Indeed, telescope time is so scarce that some astronomers never get direct access to one.

THE PAST HALF-CENTURY has revealed that we live in a much larger, older universe than had been imagined. It has also turned out to be an expanding universe. But in the last ten years or so, new surprises have been heaped on the old, and novel objects of several kinds have been detected in the heavens. The first of the dwarf galaxies was found in 1938; not until after the war did it begin to emerge that these exceedingly faint objects may be very numerous. (Even those quite near to our galaxy can only just be seen in the best instruments.) Again, stars have been found that are so cool as to be invisible, and there may be millions of these dark stars. Other stars have been found with peculiar compositions, swept by tidal magnetic fields. Yet others are grouped in pairs, almost touching, and exchange their contents. In some stars, the atoms are jammed together, giving

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them masses approaching 10 tons per cubic cm. Fritz Zwicky has prophesied the existence of stars in which the atoms are stripped of all electrons; they have been called "pygmy stars." Just over a year ago, a pair of closely-associated stars was discovered, one of which seems to fit the bill. One of the pair is very red, with a spectrum unlike that of any other star; the other is intensely blue, and is thought to have a mass equal to the sun's crammed into a volume equal to the moon's. The intense gravitational field of the dense star would, for Einsteinian reasons, redden the light of its neighbour and account for the unique spectrum.

Zwicky has also prophesied the existence of fantastically dense stars, in which the atoms themselves have collapsed; these he calls "neutron stars." Such stars, if they exist, must have densities around 100 million tons per cubic centimetre. Attempts to find them with optical instruments have been inconclusive. Since they can be expected to emit large quantities of X-rays, they may be detectable in this way. X-rays are filtered out by our atmosphere, but that streams of X-rays *are* coming from certain points in space is known from a small number of experiments involving rockets. A couple of years ago, to test the idea that weak X-rays might be emitted from the moon as a consequence of the cosmic radiation falling on it, a rocket carrying a sensitive X-ray detector was sent aloft by H. Friedman. It returned with the detector completely knocked out by a massive dose of X-rays. Later experiments showed that these were coming from certain defined points in space, including the centre of our own galaxy. Only a few such experiments have been made, all but one by the American Navy, and astronomers are impatient for the development of a systematic X-ray astronomy.

TOTALLY NEW OBJECTS may quite well be discovered in this way, and as I write this seems to have happened. The powerful X-ray source in Scorpio which Friedman discovered, known as *Sco X-1*, turns out to be extremely small in diameter—it subtends less than 20 secs/arc and it corresponds with no visible source. Since it has been shown theoretically that when stars are condensing out of the primeval atomic mist X-rays are likely to be emitted, we may be "seeing" here the birth of a star for the first time—a star embryo which has not yet begun to emit light.

Such objects, mostly too small and faint to see, may make up a large proportion of our galaxy. Zwicky argues that all matter tends towards one of two final resting places—completely dispersed or completely collapsed, and has tried to work out a "morphological astronomy" based on this idea. We, of course, are most familiar with matter in intermediate conditions, since we ourselves are in an intermediate condition, but in the universe at large this may turn out to be the exceptional case.

PERHAPS the most far-reaching of the newer conceptions in astronomy is one which concerns the highly-dispersed aspect of matter. It now seems that interstellar space, far from being empty, is filled with clouds of dust, and even with an extremely tenuous gas of individual atoms. It is calculated that there is one of these for every 100,000 cubic cms. of space—but if so, the condensed matter we see as stars comprises only one per cent of all the matter in the universe. This gas is swirling about under the influence of magnetic fields. It is also fairly hot, about 10,000°K.[1] Since temperatures up to 100,000°K. are conceivable, this is lukewarm. But whether this gas exists between galaxies as well as within them is still uncertain.

The idea that space, far from being a cold vacuum, might be a lukewarm soup, was discounted by astronomers until about 1930, when work on the relative brightness of different star clusters made it clear that something was making the more distant clusters fainter than was to be expected. The composition of the interstellar dust is still uncertain. At first it was thought to consist of metal atoms, but now ice-like compounds of the lighter atoms seem more probable. Moreover, the dust is now thought to come from the interstellar gas by accretion. And it was not until the 'thirties that it was realised that the interstellar gas was not uniformly distributed but was in the nature of clouds: in travelling 3,000 light years, light may pass through nine or ten such clouds.

The character of the cosmological problem has, accordingly, changed. The problems which currently excite astrophysicists are: where *is* the matter in the universe? what is the interstellar gas like? how hot is it? and what heats it? At the British Association in 1965, Denis Sciama offered the following opinion:

> I predict that the universe will be found to be a gigantic region of ionised hydrogen containing significant cosmic-ray fluxes and magnetic fields, with here and there a local condensation in one of which we sit admiring the universal plasma.

Discoveries such as these have thrown astronomers into a state of excitement, and the theoreticians are working overtime interpreting the results which are pouring in. Recruitment

[1] Degrees above absolute zero are denoted by K, for Lord Kelvin who first proposed this temperature scale.

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rates are rising rapidly: in the U.S. the number of Ph.D.s in astronomy is growing at 19 per cent per annum, even though the total number remains small in relation to other branches of physics (about 4 per cent). Demands are being made for a great increase in the number of observing instruments, both large ones for research and smaller one for training.[2] Public money is also being sought for new kinds of astronomy, such as the X-ray work just mentioned, and the even more recondite infra-red, ultra-violet, gamma-ray and neutrino astronomies.

Neutrinos are fantastically elusive particles discovered only ten years ago: a neutrino can pass through quarter-of-a-million miles of lead without hitting anything and so making its presence detectable. To detect neutrinos from space, scientists retreat a mile or two beneath the earth, in an attempt to filter out the local low-energy neutrinos, and set up tanks containing tens of thousands of gallons of expensive fluids or a 2,000-ton block of concrete, hoping that, in the course of a year, half a dozen neutrinos may hit an atom in them, and thus signal their presence, energy, and perhaps direction of arrival. Since neutrinos are an end-product of stellar energy transformations, they have been dubbed "the ashes of the universe" and offer not only a means of studying the interior of stars, where they are born, but also a tenuous clue to basic problems of cosmology. To detect neutrinos from other galaxies, however, would require masses of a thousand million tons or more with which they could interact. Currently, neutrino-astronomers are dreaming of structures a cubic mile in extent, sunk in the depths of the oceans, as the next step in this futuristic branch of astronomy.

An extraordinary frenzy of telescope building has seized governments, which will about treble the number of really large optical instruments, and in radio-astronomy the position is much the same. But before describing the great and costly physical effort which the world is now making to probe the remotest depths of the universe, let us take a closer look at the ideas and discoveries which have provoked this.

New Look

IT IS JUST about half a century since the new look began to creep into astronomy. When I was a boy I was taught that we live in a single star-cluster called "the galaxy."[3] But in 1917 a new method of estimating the distances of nebulous objects was developed which suggested that some of them were not stars but vast aggregations of stars, some so remote that the individual stars could not be resolved. The notion of "island universes" lying far outside the Milky Way, implying a far larger universe, hotly divided astronomers—so much so that on April 26, 1920, a "Great Debate" was arranged at the National Academy of Science in Washington between the two leading proponents: H. D. Curtis (*for*) and Harlow Shapley (*against*). Neither convinced the other, and it was another six years before E. P. Hubble's observations at Mount Wilson settled the matter. Even then, the fact that these objects were quite as large as our own galaxy was not clear; and it was not until 1944 that the matter was unequivocally established.

Ironically, it was the war which made this possible; the reduced night-glow consequent on the black-out improved the performance of the largest telescope then available, the 100-in. on Mount Wilson, to the point where it could just resolve stars in certain disputed nebulae, such as Andromeda.

Today we know that the universe contains up to 1,000 million galaxies, most containing at least 100 million stars. And we know our own galaxy to be a bun-shaped mass, 100,000 light years across, and our own sun to be a minor member some two-thirds of the way out from the centre.[4] This vast cluster revolves about once in 200 million years, and has probably revolved some 50 times since the beginning of the universe. It seems also to be one of a cluster of galaxies themselves revolving round a point in the direction of the constellation Virgo.

At school we used to try to astonish ourselves by supposing that the earth was the size of an orange and calculating the distance of the sun (about 1500 yards away). Let us adapt this technique by supposing that the earth is a poppy seed: then the moon is a tobacco seed 1½ inches away. Twenty feet away lies another seed called Venus and 47 feet away a blob of gas about

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[2] Today a hundred observers may be queueing to use a single large telescope, and in the next decade the number of astronomers is expected to double.

[3] The idea that there might be more than one star-cluster had been suggested by Kant in 1755, Thomas Wright in 1750, and by Swedenborg as early as 1734, but it had not been taken seriously by most astronomers, Herschel excepted.

[4] Astronomers measure distance in light-years; the distance light travels in a year is about 6×10^{12} miles. Scientists express large numbers as powers of ten, which saves time when the numbers are large. Thus $10^{12} = 1{,}000{,}000{,}000{,}000$. The index number is the same as the number of zeros; hence 10^{78} (a number which often occurs in cosmology) represents 1 followed by 78 noughts, a number it is impractical to write out. A minus sign indicates fractions; *e.g.*, 10^{-6} = one millionth. Since this convention also avoids the confusion between the American and British billion, I shall use it for large numbers.

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5 inches in diameter, the sun. The nearest fixed stars are then 2,500 miles away, and range from half-an-inch to four feet in diameter, though a few are a hundred feet across. On this scale, the galaxy is nearly 60 million miles across. (Incidentally, in this model, light travels at 590 miles a year or about a yard a minute, so that it takes four years to arrive from the nearest stars.) On this scale, the *nearest* galaxies are 600 million miles distant (more than six times as far as the actual sun), while the remotest known are at six million million (6×10^{12}) miles, so that the model becomes inadequate for its purpose.

If we could journey outward from our own galaxy with inconceivable speed, we should perceive that it was one of a cluster, known to astronomers as the Local Group. This contains nineteen galaxies, one of which (the nebula in Andromeda) is somewhat larger than our own, and nearly 2 million light years from it. Journeying further, we should come to other clusters, some much larger than our own; the first big one lies at about 30 million light years and contains a thousand visible galaxies, and perhaps others too small for us to detect. The remotest known clusters are at least ten times as far away again. It may also be that we should perceive clusters of clusters of galaxies, but this is uncertain.

HOWEVER, THE WAY in which these distances are calculated is very inferential. The surveyor's method of measuring the angle subtended when an object is viewed from two separated points, can only be applied to the nearest stars, even when the two points are on opposite ends of a diameter of the earth's orbit. The main method used by astronomers is to compare the apparent brightness of the object with its real, or absolute brightness—just as we might estimate the distance of a car at night by the brightness of its headlights. (In doing so, we depend upon our knowledge of the normal brightness of headlights at some standard distance, and would be misled in estimating the distance of a car with unusually bright or unusually dim lights.) The astronomer's problem thus becomes to estimate the absolute brightness. The breakthrough technique came from the observation that certain stars which fluctuate in brightness do so at a rate which is linked to their brightness. Some are near enough for their distance to be calculated by normal means. It is assumed that the relationship holds for more distant variable stars, so that their real brightness can be deduced from the period of their fluctuation. In this way the distance of a galaxy can be estimated if we can find variable stars in it. However, there are problems of interpretation —and in 1952 it was found necessary to *double* all distance estimates based on this system when the world's largest telescope failed to detect the fainter variable stars in the Andromeda nebula.

This method becomes useless where galaxies are so remote that individual stars cannot be distinguished, and an even more chancy method is employed. The light from a receding object becomes redder, for much the same reason that the sound of a receding train-whistle is reduced in pitch. (Conversely light from an approaching object appears bluer, just as the noise of an approaching train is raised in pitch.) By the end of the '20s, V. M. Slipher at the Lowell Observatory had listed some 40 galaxies the light of which was reddened, as shown by the fact that spectral lines are shifted towards the red end of the spectrum: this is the now-famous "red shift." Thus they must be receding from us. Hubble calculated their distances, showing that the more distant were receding faster; this confirmed a prediction of relativity theory. It soon became clear that, in every direction, galaxies were receding from us—the universe was expanding! So rapid was the calculated speed of recession of some of them that the universe could almost be said to be exploding.

Moreover, one can calculate back to the point when the explosion started: it appears to be about 12,000 m. years ago—a figure which is not inconsistent with the known age of the earth, around 4,000 m. years.

Much of the story of astronomy since has consisted in the attempt to verify this extraordinary finding, or to find an alternative explanation.

Meanwhile, we assume that the distance of an object can be inferred from the extent to which its light is red-shifted; this leads up to the conclusion that the remotest objects yet seen are some 4×10^9 light-years away. Moreover, at about double this distance, the speed of recession approaches the speed of light, so that light from objects at this distance can never reach us. Indeed, relativity theory predicts that such objects vanish from our space-time. Thus, though the universe is infinite, there is an "observable universe" of finite size which is all we can ever hope to know about.

Darkness at Night

COSMOLOGISTS have been much preoccupied with a paradox propounded more than a century ago by a German astronomer, Heinrich Olbers. If we assume (he said) that the universe is infinite and is everywhere populated with stars as richly as it is in the areas we can observe, the sky at night should be bright. For anywhere we look, there must at some distance be a star; and though the distant stars will be faint, they will be very numerous. In fact, it can be calculated that

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such star-shine should be 10,000 times brighter than the sun.

But actually the nights are dark. We cannot argue that the light is absorbed by clouds of dust, because the enormous energy in it would heat the dust until it glowed too. So we have to drop the initial assumption, and assume either that the stars are less and less densely distributed, as we get further from the earth, or that they are receding. Cosmologists dislike the first alternative, since it puts the earth in a special position (*i.e.* situated in the densest part of the universe) for which there is no other evidence. On the other hand, the idea that the galaxies are receding is supported (as I have described) by other data; so this fits in very well.

After the notion of an expanding universe was well established, an opposition party sprang up, headed by Professors Fred Hoyle and Hermann Bondi. They objected to the whole idea on what were basically philosophical grounds. A century ago, they pointed out, we were told that the world was 6,000 years old. The figure merely indicated the paucity of human imagination. Today we are told it is 6,000 million years old (or thereabouts). This is no less jejeune. If the universe is infinite in space it must be infinite in time, and this means that it must look the same a thousand million years ago as it does today or will a thousand million years hence.[5] Moreover they feel that it must be homogenous—*e.g.* the same in appearance in the large, everywhere.

To justify this *a priori* assumption and reconcile it with the known recessions, they postulated that new stars are continually being created by condensation from new matter that is continually being formed throughout the universe. Thus the number of stars in any given volume of space will always be the same, even though they are not the same stars. Much mathematical ingenuity was devoted to showing how this might be so. The possibility of testing this hypothesis was provided by the advent of radio astronomy.

IT WAS JUST BEFORE the war that a radio enthusiast, Karl Jansky, discovered that some of the background-noise in his receivers was coming from the sun, and radio-astronomy was born. "Dishes" capable of detecting the radio-emission from remote celestial objects were built and soon several hundred such sources of radio-emission had been catalogued, but not until 1951 was one definitely identified with an optical source, *i.e.* a visible object.

Radio waves are much less weakened by the Red Shift, and the great radio telescopes can detect emission from far further out in space than light telescopes can; but they do not indicate the whereabouts of the source so precisely and elaborate methods must be used to counteract this defect. About 100 radio sources have now been identified with visible sources; of the remainder some are presumably so remote that the source is quite invisible in the largest optical telescope.

This new tool, therefore, made it possible to estimate the density of galaxies in remote parts of the universe. And since both light and radio waves take millions of years to travel from these distances, it follows that we are examining part of the universe as it was millions of years ago. Thus it is possible to discriminate between the "big-bang" and the "steady state" theories. Martin Ryle's most recent figures point so strongly in the direction of the former, and because stars with compositions different from what is predicted by the theory have recently been found, Hoyle and Bondi have now pretty well given up their position, to the accompaniment of jokes about pouring cold water on troubled Hoyle.

What is more intriguing to many astronomers is the fact that some of the galaxies are emitting energy in the radio-range at energies which are quite inexplicable. The radio-output of normal galaxies can be explained by the usual nuclear processes which occur in stars. But from Cygnus A, one of the first radio sources to be identified (since it is the strongest) the output is about 10^{34} kilowatts. Still odder, the energy is emitted from two points, 100,000 light-years on either side of the visible galaxy. This suggests that an explosion is occurring, an inference now verified by other means. There are even cases where the energy appears to come from four sources.

The mystery of the mechanism by which these titanic energies—the most powerful ever perceived by man—are created, remains. One suggested solution is perhaps the most fantastic thing in astronomy. As Fred Hoyle, with William Fowler of Cal Tech, suggested, the matter in these galaxies may be collapsing, for some reason unknown. Now Einstein argued that gravitation is equivalent to the curvature of space. The German astronomer Karl Schwartzschild worked out that if enough matter collapses, the gravitational field will become so intense that space will curl back on itself until it isolates its contents from the rest of the universe. The matter then vanishes from space and time, radiating enormous amounts of

[5] The alternative argument is: the universe will eventually end up all at the same temperature, due to the hot parts warming up the cold parts, and themselves cooling off as they do so. (This is the "heat death" foreseen by Clausius.) But if it has an end, then it must have had a beginning.

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energy. The ultimate radius at which this envelopment occurs is known as "the Schwarzschild singularity." It can be calculated that energy equivalent to that radiated by Cygnus A would be produced if only 100 million stars the size of the sun collapsed to the Schwarzschild radius. This is about the right number for a galaxy, whereas it would need trillions of suns to produce the same energy by nuclear processes.

Blue and Hot

THE CURRENT AIR of excitement originates in attempts initiated in 1961 to identify three radio-sources which seemed to be more distant than any known. They matched up however with certain bright stars assumed to be in our own galaxy. But in 1963 the Mount Palomar astronomers announced that they had measured the red shifts, and these proved to be unprecedentedly large—so large as to imply that they were enormously distant, in fact the most distant objects yet observed, more than half-way out to the edge of the observable universe. (The exact distance estimate depends on which cosmological model is assumed.) Even the nearest (the now-famous *3C 273*) was more than 1,000 million light-years distant.

But if they were so distant, these brilliant objects, some of which can be seen with any good amateur telescope, must be inconceivably bright. Each one is brighter than our entire galaxy of a thousand million stars, while being far smaller in size. They are thus the most brilliant objects ever seen by man. Small wonder that they were described by one of the astronomers concerned as "perhaps the most bizarre and puzzling objects ever observed through a telescope. . . ." Neither stars nor galaxies, what were they to be called? Astronomers refer to them as quasi-stellar objects, or "quasars" for short. A flood of effort was directed on to the problem—and something like a hundred were soon found. Last year the Australian group of radio astronomers reported the existence of "invisible quasars"—too remote to have been noticed by an optical observer—estimated to be receding at speeds up to 174,000 miles a second, 94 per cent of the speed of light. Meanwhile a red shift was actually measured corresponding to 80 per cent of the speed of light and implying that the object was 12,000 million light-years distant. Almost at the same time, one of the Palomar astronomers, Allan Sandage, reported the existence of quasi-stellar *galaxies*, one hundred times brighter than ordinary galaxies and 500 times as numerous as quasars (which now have to be distinguished from the QSOs by calling them QSSs, or quasi-stellar sources!) The data, he further declared, fitted the assumption of an oscillating universe, *i.e.* one which expands and then contracts, alternately, with each phase lasting 82×10^9 years. But others advanced evidence that certain of these strong sources (such as *3C 273*) were only from 30 to 300 light-years distant. In addition, it was found that certain very blue stars, which emit no radio noise, also displayed massive red shifts, implying remoteness. These seem greatly to outnumber the radio-quasars: there are thousands of them. The absence of radio-emission just complicates the issue.

Recent radio-telescope observations in California suggests that as many as 28 per cent of all radio sources may be quasars, making these strange objects far more numerous than had been thought. Thus the problem remains unresolved.

THE "GRAVITATIONAL COLLAPSE" THEORY wilted under examination, leaving the annihilation of matter by anti-matter as the only explanation which seemed to hold. But when it was found that the quasars were fluctuating rapidly in brightness (which implies a size-limit) and seemed to be only ten light-years across, instead of the 100,000 light-years appropriate to a galaxy, astronomers began to wonder if they were not being fooled by the red shift. Could something have magnified it—a gravitational effect, for instance? On the other hand, if they are objects within our own galaxy, why are they *all* travelling away from us?

Fred Hoyle, after reviewing the situation, rejected all three theories and with uncharacteristic hesitation ventured the view that there must be some peculiarity of very weak fields about which we are completely ignorant to account for the reddening. In 1966 he published figures suggesting that the red shift is completely meaningless as an index of the distance of such remote objects.

Last May, the situation entered a new phase when X-ray detectors carried on an Aerobee rocket picked up powerful X-radiation from 37 sources, 3 of which were not coincident with any known star or galaxy and from their position were likely to be situated outside our own galaxy. (The observations also confirmed that X-rays were being emitted by the galaxy M 87 and by the remote quasar 3C 273, intrinsically the strongest X-ray source known.) The current idea is that the so-called Seyfert galaxies—which have many of the characteristics of quasars—quasars and radio-galaxies represent successive phases in the explosive evolution of galaxies. To check this idea, astronomers would like to see if the X-ray output of these remote sources varies with time as the light and radio output does, and also find out how it is distributed between different wave-lengths. But this means

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keeping a spectrometer outside our atmosphere for prolonged periods, which cannot be done with rockets. Since the Orbiting Observatory now being planned by the Americans does not include provision for this, we may have to wait until there is an observatory on the moon to settle the matter—unless the European Space Research Organisation, which is contemplating puting up an orbiting observatory, decides to investigate the matter.

There, in a state of confusion unparalleled since the days of Copernicus, cosmology remains at this writing. The only thing which has become a matter of some confidence is the notion that the universe was launched with a fantastic explosion—the "primordial fireball"—and the radio and X-radiation from that unparalleled event is still washing round the universe.

Behind the Beyond

BEHIND these comparatively objective mysteries there may lurk others of an almost mystical kind. Since the days of Sir Arthur Eddington theoreticians have vaguely sensed some subtle underlying pattern in the universe but have been unable to put their fingers on it. Recently these hints have become more numerous. Many of them concern the nature of gravity, which remains very puzzling to physicists.

While in the last fifty years there has been an enormous advance in our understanding of electricity and magnetism, our understanding of gravity remains where it did when Einstein formulated his theory. Michael Faraday always felt the two kinds of force must be connected in some way; and Einstein spent the latter part of his life in an attempt to connect them, but in vain.

It is obviously worth wondering whether gravity is a form of radiation comparable with electromagnetic radiation. Since the latter takes place in small packets known as *quanta* (or, in the case of light, as photons), it has been guessed that gravity is also emitted in packets, hopefully christened *gravitons*. It can be calculated that such events would be exceedingly rare, the time needed for a nucleus to emit a graviton being 10^{53} years—as against 10^{-12} seconds for a photon, so we cannot hope to see it happen. Gravity is also a vastly weaker force than electricity (10^{40} times weaker in fact), and the gravity waves emitted by the entire earth total only a hundredth of a watt, much less energy than a torch bulb. Hence such waves, if they exist, are undetectable by any technique available at present. Another odd thing about gravity is that, for a person or object falling freely, it vanishes; Newton failed to explain this.

Cosmologists dimly perceive that there is some subtle connection between matter in one part of the universe and matter in another. Einstein had already argued that a single particle, if all the rest of the universe ceased to exist, would have no mass. More graphically put, the reason a pendulum swings in a path which remains in an unchanged relation to the fixed stars is that it is influenced by the fixed stars.

Einstein achieved a description of gravity by abandoning the attempt to treat it as a force acting between two points and by using instead the concept known as "field theory"—for him, gravity was equivalent to the deformation of space in four-dimensional terms. Recently Fred Hoyle and his colleague J. V. Narlikar have attempted to rewrite the theory of gravitation in terms of forces and points, after considering some highly recondite objections to Einstein's account. They conclude that remote parts of the universe *do* affect one another. Putting it concretely, if half the universe were removed, everything here would double in mass and the earth would in consequence move closer to the sun, which would grow about a hundred times brighter. There is no way to test this conclusion, at present, and it will be some years before scientists decide whether the Hoyle-Narlikar reformulation is going to get us any further.

Cosmologists are always looking for regularities and connections, and they know of one which hardly makes sense at all. More than thirty years ago the great mathematician Paul Dirac observed that various basic constants—such as the mass and charge of the electron, the speed of light, the age of the universe and total number of particles in it—were connected by simple ratios. Thus the age of the universe is about 10^{40} times as long as the time it takes light to cross the diameter of an elementary particle, such as an electron—and this is also the ratio by which electro-magnetic forces exceed gravitational ones. Other such comparisons can be made, and the ratios always come out as 10^{39} (to be more accurate) or 10^{78}, which is the square of the former. Is there, then, some fundamental regularity in nature, the reason for which still eludes us?

WHILE THESE COSMIC issues constitute the dramatic centre of astronomy, there are many in the field who are content to work on less flamboyant aspects of the subject. The present Astronomer-Royal, Sir Richard Woolley, is a "galaxy man": he wants to understand the history and dynamics of our own galaxy, which is, after all, the galaxy most accessible to us, and thus the one which can teach us what to expect in remoter clusters. Others limit their attention even more drastically to the solar system: our sun is the star

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most accessible to us and can teach us about other stars.

The prospect of space-travel has greatly stimulated such studies. We need to know much more about solar flares if space-travel is to be safe. Jumping over the obvious interest in the moon, space-travel and space-probes may resolve such ancient mysteries as the nature of the Red Spot on Jupiter and the Blue Clearing on Mars. It will reveal whether there are canals there, and disclose what lies beneath the clouds of Venus. Other questions loom beyond: are there, for instance, planets circling our sun further out than Pluto? Pluto is currently regarded as the outermost planet, but in 1979 its path will bring it inside the orbit of Neptune, and some astronomers doubt whether it is a planet at all. It may be a satellite of Neptune which has escaped; so, conceivably, there are other escaped satellites even further out. There are telescopes which could detect them, but there would be about two million equally faint star images out of which to sieve them.

THE OLDEST OF ALL PROBLEMS in astronomy—the origin of the solar system—still remains a mystery. Both the theory that it condensed from a nebulous gas (which dates from Kant and Laplace) and the catastrophic theories, by which a star passed close to the sun, which Jeans popularised, are open to serious unanswered objections. Professor H. Alfvén's new theory, which introduces magnetic as well as gravitational forces to account for the facts, has not yet been accepted.

New Tools

WHAT IS REVOLUTIONARY in what I have described would have been impossible without one thing—the fantastic 200-in. Hale telescope on Palomar Mountain in California. The figure indicates the diameter of the mirror —about 16 ft. 8 in. Until 1959, the runner-up was the 100-in. on Mount Wilson, and since the light-gathering power is a function of the area, the Hale telescope, which began work in 1948, was some four times as powerful as its much older rival. No one knew whether a mirror this size could be successfully poured, when the attempt was made in 1934, and indeed the first attempt failed. The annealing process lasted a year; the grinding and polishing eleven years. The mirror (made of Pyrex) was then a true paraboloid to within a millionth of an inch. With its mountings the structure weighed 500 tons: the whole thing had to be capable of being moved without any juddering by most delicate amounts, and without distortion in tube or mirror when the position changed. It represented the ultimate in engineering technique and has been called, not unreasonably, "the eighth wonder of the world."

Today we might go a little further. The Russians are trying to construct a 236-in. instrument, to be the world's largest. The smallness of the margin gives a clue to the narrowness of the technical leeway available. (Rumour has it that they tried to pour a 275-in. mirror, but presumably it was a failure.)

The layman seldom realises the extent to which astronomers press up against the limits of technique. If they seldom put their eye to a telescope any more it is primarily because their eye is insufficiently sensitive. True, it can detect a single photon, or unit of light. But a plate exposed for several hours can respond to all the photons arriving during that time. Afterwards, it will be developed by special methods, designed to get the last iota of response out of it. The sensitive material itself will have been made especially for astronomy, all the normal considerations in manufacturing photographic material—such as latitude in exposure or keeping properties—having been ruthlessly sacrificed for sensitivity. And in the end the light may only just perceptibly darken the plate.

The astronomer's bugbear is the amount of light in the night sky, to which cities are constantly adding. When photographing an extremely faint object, the limit to the length of exposure is set by the fact that the night-glow itself eventually begins to darken the plate. Already Mount Wilson is seriously handicapped by the night-glow from Pasadena and Los Angeles, while Mount Palomar is beginning to worry about San Diego, 40 miles distant.

Currently there are prospects of a massive bonus in telescope effectiveness, thanks to the development of a device known as an "Image Intensifier." Some years ago, designers were predicting that it might multiply the light available by a thousand times, and there was a wave of disappointment when it turned out that this was far too optimistic and gains of about five times were more probable. The disappointment was overdone—to an astronomer, to improve sensitivity by a factor of five times would be an enormous step forward: the limits of the universe he can see would recede to double the present distance, and the volume of space he could explore by many times that.[6] RCA are

[6] Actually, the pendulum swung too far: gains of about thirty times are now in prospect. Much of the early work on these devices was done in England, by Professor I. D. McGee of Imperial College, but the astronomical application has been pioneered by a Frenchman, P. Lallemand. His device must be sealed into a vacuum tube, which has to be broken to get the photographic plates out, a costly and inconvenient procedure, but this will certainly be got round before long.

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currently constructing 20 image tubes capable of tripling a telescope's power, on a National Science Foundation grant, for distribution to observatories around the world.

While the big mirrors provide the maximum light-gathering power for the detection and examination of faint objects, instruments of a different type are required for photographing large areas of the sky. This is necessary for the preparation of star-maps and for the detection of "proper motions." The stars are in general "fixed"—that is to say, they are so remote that any movement they may be making can be neglected. But there are streaming movements within our own galaxy, and the motion of the newer stars is measurable. The simplest way to detect them is to take a photograph of a star-field and then wait some years and take another. By superimposing the two pictures, any star which has moved can be detected. (Simpler than superimposition is a process known as "blinking." By presenting the two plates alternately at intervals of a second or less, the displaced star appears to jump from one position to another, in an easily noticed way.)

Up to now, the longest time-interval for which such pairs of plates are generally available is less than half a century, the reference plates being those taken at the Lowell Observatory, in the search for Pluto in the years before 1930. As the century wears on, it will become possible to detect progressively smaller rates of displacement.

The type of telescope now used for mapping the heavens was devised by one Bernhard Schmidt, born an Estonian, in 1932. Until recently, the largest in the world was the 48-in. Schmidt on Palomar Mountain, usually known as "the big Schmidt," but a 54-in. Schmidt is now in service in Germany. The requirement is that there should be no distortion or variation in light-gathering power over the entire field: they are a kind of camera.

After a Schmidt, with an 18-in. lens, came into operation in 1936 (the construction having been financed by Hale, the man who had instigated the building of the 200-in.), new results soon poured in. In five years, 19 supernovae—titanic explosions as brilliant as a hundred million suns—were discovered. Previously only half a dozen had been known. The presence of vast quantities of interstellar dust, in some places quite obscuring the background stars, was established. Thin filaments, linking galaxies together, were seen. The strange intensely-blue stars (known as *H–Z* stars) were discovered. So intriguing were these findings that Hale approached Rockefeller for money to build a larger Schmidt, and a quarter of a million dollars were provided, which resulted in "the big Schmidt," which started work in 1949.[7] With its aid the great Palomar Sky Atlas of stars was prepared and became the standby of astronomers everywhere. The usefulness of this instrument would be enhanced if it could be equipped with a device known as an optical grating, and it is lamentable that this has not been financed. (To prepare it, a ruling engine about twice as large as any now in existence would first have to be constructed.)

The dominant problem remains the sheer quantity of material there is to look at. It is estimated that there are a 100 thousand billion (10^{17}) stars. Even if astronomers were ten times as numerous as they are, they could not in the course of a century make spectrographic examinations on as many as one in every hundred thousand of them. The only thing which might make a reasonably thorough survey possible is the fully automated observatory. In Arizona recently, I saw a tape-controlled 50-in. telescope which will line itself up on any pre-determined star, make measurements, feed them to a computer and then move to another. If it becomes wet or windy or cloudy, the dome closes automatically and the survey is suspended; it starts up automatically as soon as the weather clears. At present the system is experimental, but within a few years it will probably become routine, and we might see the world sprinkled with robot observatories, remorselessly scanning the heavens and occasionally emitting a *"ping"* to indicate that one has found something worthy of a human being's attention. Equally important are the newly developed automatic measuring machines, such as the British *Galaxy*, which measure the positions of stars on stars on the Schmidt photographs and feed the coordinates to a computer.

This is why astronomers are almost unanimous that what is most wanted at the moment is not larger telescopes but just more of the biggish ones—say, about 150-in. The number of objects in the sky is so enormous that astronomers can only look at an incalculably small fraction of the whole, and several recent discoveries have come from the mere chance of looking at a novel object. There may well be absolutely unforeseen types of celestial objects in the heavens, simply waiting for someone to stumble on them.

What they would particularly like is more telescopes in the Southern hemisphere. The

[7] Schmidts have a main mirror and a correcting lens, and are usually identified by the size of the latter. The main mirror of the 48-in. is 72-in. and that of the 54-in. is 80-in.

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nearest galaxies to us, the two Magellanic Clouds, are only seen in the southern sky; Andromeda, the nearest visible in the N. hemisphere is more than eight times further off. Hence a 150-in. telescope in the southern hemisphere might teach us more than a 300-in. one in the northern hemisphere, supposing such an instrument were even practicable.

Astronomers may get their wish at last, for the Carnegie Institution is planning a 200-in. instrument either in Chile or in Australia, while a European group is also clubbing together to erect a 140-in. instrument in Chile. Professor Kuiper, of the Lunar and Planetary Observatory in Arizona, has persuaded the Hawaiian authorities to lease him the top of a 13,630 ft. mountain on Mauna Kea, and to build a road up there. He claims it will prove the world's best site, and if test observations are satisfactory, no doubt he will succeed in getting a large instrument put up. (At that altitude breathing will be difficult and effort impossible, so that observers will have to descend by day to a lower level.)

For some years there has been a plan to keep Britain in the race by building a large instrument in Australia, jointly with the Australians. Though both sides declared themselves willing to go ahead, and a team, led by Sir Richard Woolley, the Astronomer Royal, visited Australia a few years ago to choose a site, the money never seemed to be forthcoming. Last spring, it was announced that a 150-in. instrument would definitely be built, and astronomers are waiting to see when this announcement will be implemented.

Almost simultaneously the French announced that they were considering building a 140-in. instrument, to cost £3¾ m. with ancillary equipment, and a big Schmidt also.

In addition to all this, a 150-in. is under construction at Kitt Peak—a $10m. project—while Canada is to have a 140-in. at the Queen Elizabeth II Observatory. Since Russia has completed two more 102-in. instruments, this will leave Britain's new 98-in. Isaac Newton telescope about the world's twelfth largest: when first conceived in the 'thirties, it was expected to be one of the world's largest.[8]

The construction of radio telescopes is proceeding at an equally rapid pace, and a 1964 survey lists over one hundred of 30-foot size or larger, completed, planned or under construction. The 250-foot dish at Jodrell Bank, completed 1957, remains the world's largest fully steerable instrument, though ground-arrays several thousand feet in length are becoming numerous.

Hectic as the current wave of telescope building may seem, plans for the future are still more ambitious. The report on *Ground Based Astronomy* issued in 1964 by the National Science Foundation calls for an expenditure over ten years of $224m. (£80m.), of which $60m. is to be for three giant telescopes of 150–200-in. with another $1m. for a four-year design study for a telescope in the 350–400-in. range. An instrument this size would present a new range of engineering problems, might take fifteen years to build and cost $100m. (£36m.). However, to put this in perspective, it must be recalled that America is launching a series of orbiting observatories, each one of which costs $60m. launched, and its life is one year. Three giant telescopes with a life of fifty years for the same sum seems to many astronomers a better bargain.

The NSF's plans for equipping radio-astronomy are even more ambitious—$97m. over ten years for two dishes bigger than Jodrell Bank's and two static arrays comparable with the big Russian and Australian arrays. The figure reflects American awareness that, in radio astronomy at present, Europe and Australia are ahead of her.

The total conception is incredibly bold—quite "Elizabethan" in its vaulting ambition. It is depressing that Britain, at the moment, does not have even one soul-stirring project going forward. The Isaac Newton telescope was fairly ambitious when first proposed, but thirty years of procrastination have made it minor before it is even ready. Our annual expenditure on astronomy, from central funds, was £1·8m. in 1965.

Watch This Space

THE NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION, with a dry understatement of the kind the English pride themselves upon, called their report "Ground Based Astronomy" without making any direct reference to the new space-borne astronomy which will also demand support during the next decade and which is even more expensive. The earth's atmosphere—fortunately for living things—screens off the lethal gamma- and X-rays and greatly attenuates the ultra-violet rays, all three of which are now of

[8] To give some idea of the economics of telescope building, here are some costs, calculated on the basis of U.S. prices in 1963:

Mt. Palomar (California)	$6,950,000	£2·48 m.
Lick 120-in. (California)	$2,400,000	£860,000
Mt. Wilson 100-in. (Cal.)	$1,680,000	£600,000
Kitt Peak 150-in. (California)	$3,880,000	£1,390,000

These prices are for the telescope, mountings, and dome, but do not include the site, access roads, or auxiliary observing equipment, etc. They are taken from an appendix to the National Science Foundation's *Ground Based Astronomy: a 10-Year Programme.*

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great interest to astronomers.[9] Even optical astronomy stands to benefit from space technology, since the limiting factor in resolution is "the quality of the seeing." As Fred Hoyle has said, "astronomers are like fish in a pond trying to see what is happening on dry land...." They look at the stars through a wavering column of air miles high, and instabilities due to heat are a major difficulty. At one moment the mirror may be reflecting a sharp image, seconds later it has broken up into a diffuse pool of light wobbling all over the mirror. It is for this reason and because the air is more transparent there, that telescopes are usually built on mountain tops, and not because it gets them that much nearer the stars! Even the best-placed telescopes enjoy only a dozen nights of superlative seeing a year.

Unfortunately, to send instruments aloft on rockets is hopelessly uneconomic, and even the orbiting observatory is absurdly costly. ESRO's large astronomical satellite carrying a 30-in. telescope will cost £15m. An observatory on the moon would be something else again, and when one is established a new astronomical revolution will be on.

[9] It also cuts off nearly 2 octaves of the infra-red, below 22 microns in wavelength.

LOOKING BACK ON the explosive increase in our knowledge of the universe which has occurred in the past half-century, one name stands out above all others: George Ellery Hale. His foresight and courage gave us both the Schmidt camera and the great mirror on Palomar Mountain, after quarter of a century still the world's finest telescope by a large margin. Without the aid of these two instruments, all the ingenuity of the theoreticians and the care of the observers would have been unable to make the advances I have outlined. Today, there seems to be no one man on whom his mantle has fallen, and telescope-building has become so costly as to necessitate a national or supra-national effort—such as the consortium formed by ten European countries to build a joint telescope. The co-operation of groups of universities in running such instruments is also indicative of the new approach. It is regrettable that Britain, as a country, has not shown a comparable degree of imagination, despite the memorable lead given it in radio astronomy by the courage and foresight of Sir Bernard Lovell.

When Zwicky and Baade went to see Hale in the 'thirties, he gave them one piece of advice: "Make no mean plans...." It is still good counsel.

Partings

Calpurnia weeping

Dropping like resin from needles of trees
in the Gallic summer
capsules of nightwater
endlessly shatter over the tiles

The walls burning Pompeiian red
ancestral effigies peering from pedestals
shadows hiding in the corners of the atrium
Calpurnia motionless weeping

The air pregnant with water
Calpurnia barefoot her stola falling
moves like a soft breath
This morning she is ageing

Jeffrey Hamm

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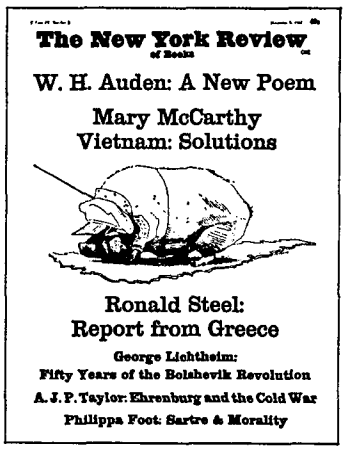

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NOTES & TOPICS

Is Pornography a Cause of Crime?

WHETHER pornography should be treated as a crime is largely a moral question. In her book *On Iniquity*, Pamela Hansford Johnson was more concerned with a factual and logical question: Is pornography a cause of crime? She became inclined to think so as she reported (scantily) and reflected (impressionistically) on the "Moors" trial in which Ian Brady and Myra Hindley were found guilty of having murdered an adolescent boy (Evans) and of having abused, tortured and murdered a little girl aged ten and a boy twelve years old. The bodies of the child victims were found in the moors nearby. The motive was sexual gratification: the pair compelled the children to pose for obscene pictures and made a recording of the terrified screams, the sobs and pitiful pleas for mercy of ten-year-old Lesley Ann Downey as they tortured her to death. In 1966, a court in Chester sentenced the couple to life imprisonment, the severest penalty available.

Although continuing her longstanding opposition to the death penalty, Lady Snow felt uneasy: the outcome of the trial was "aesthetically" disappointing—it did not produce a catharsis. The parents of the dead children (and possibly the community generally) probably were not relieved either by learning that English law now compels them to feed, house and protect the murderers as long as they live. (The death penalty may have drawbacks but life imprisonment has no fewer.)

Miss Johnson briefly asks whether the murderers might be insane but finds no reason to think so. Neither did the defence. (Both defendants testified rationally, if not very credibly). In the U.S. insanity might have been pleaded more easily: many American judges and psychiatrists are convinced that people are born good and that wicked acts are sufficient proof that the perpetrators were sick (preferably driven into sickness by society). These psychiatrists and judges transform "sickness" from an independently testable clinical category into the morally necessary cause of all wicked acts. Therefore, the perpetrators of outrageous acts are made sick by definition. Thus, a factual category is transformed into a (rather dubious) moral category unfalsifiable by evidence, yet withdrawn from philosophical scrutiny by being disguised as a scientific (clinical) finding. Psychiatry becomes a normative pseudo-science; and the administration of justice an odd way of providing therapy.

Unfortunately Miss Johnson's reporting tells us more about her reactions to the proceedings, and to the defendants, than about their personalities. Perhaps it is because she is so honestly puzzled about behaviour so alien to her that she wonders whether it was Brady's reading which transformed the benevolent utilitarianism so familiar to her—it does not occur to her to question it—into the malevolent utilitarianism which Brady used to rationalise his actions.

Brady had a library almost exclusively concerned with sex and sadism. The works of the Marquis de Sade were prominent and Brady thought of himself as a disciple of his philosophy.

It is here that the issue is joined. Did Brady read what he read because he was what he was? (Might he even have gratified his pre-existing disposition more often by action without the vicarious satisfaction yielded by his reading?) Or, conversely, did Brady become what he became because of his reading? In short, was the reading the effect or the cause?[1] Posed in this way, the question can be (and has been) endlessly debated. But if it is formulated more reasonably, a tentative answer can be given.

OBVIOUSLY NOT ALL READERS of de Sade become sadists; nor do all non-readers lead blameless lives. It follows that reading de Sade is not sufficient to become a sadist, nor necessary. It does not follow that reading him has no effect,

ERNEST VAN DEN HAAG *continues the discussion of "The Follies of Censorship" (see the comments by J. W. Lambert and Kenneth Allsop in the July* ENCOUNTER *as well as the article by George Steiner in the October 1965* ENCOUNTER). *Mr. van den Haag is Professor of Social Philosophy at New York University and Lecturer in Psychology at the New School. He is the author of* The Fabric of Society (*1957*) *among other books.*

[1] Mr. J. W. Lambert knows that "the appetites of people like Brady are formed long before any books . . . can have influenced them. Their appetites will lead them to literature not *vice versa*." Unfortunately Mr. Lambert does not disclose the source of his knowledge. If he has evidence why not disclose it? Or is he pronouncing a dogma? That the opposite case has not been proven is, he surely knows, not proof of his contention. At any rate the issue is not so much "appetites"—these are common enough although usually unconscious—but their translation into action. This translation can plausibly be fostered by literary, moral, or social support. I think it has been.

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or that the effect cannot be, at times, decisive either in initiating an inclination leading to acts, or in precipitating acts when the inclination exists.[2] The possibility of sadism is in all of us. Various external conditions may lead us to sadistic actions, or to mere fantasies, or to repudiation of either. Reading of the fantasies of others may lead to actions no less than other external stimuli. From the fact that not all readers of the Bible become Christians or act as such, and that some non-readers do, few people would conclude that the Bible has no influence. Or (to avoid the issue of "grace"): not all readers of Marx become Marxists, but some do; some non-readers might have become socialists anyway. Are we to say that Marx had no influence?

HOW CAN literate persons accept Jimmy Walker's famous dictum, "No girl was ever seduced by a book"? Dante's view expressed by Francesca, that she and Paolo were seduced by a book (*galeotto fu il libro e chi lo scrisse*) is certainly more realistic. Actions are influenced by ideas; even emotions—such as love or hate—are often shaped by ideas and ideal models. Else why write about them, or about anything? The desire for sex may inhere in us. But when and how to gratify it, what actions are morally permissible and what actions are not, whether and when to seduce (or be seduced) and how, whether and when to rape, or torture, or kill—these decisions are influenced by culture and milieu, in turn certainly influenced by literature—quite apart from its direct influence on individuals.

Of course it is hard to trace the direct causes of any individual act, and to say whether it would have occurred without the book that, however indirectly, suggested it. The possible causes cannot be isolated from each other and their role in any action is difficult to assess. But this hardly argues that books have no influence. It is odd (as well as wrong) to defend the freedom of literature by pretending that it has no influence. The influence of books varies from case to case; it can contribute to the formation of dispositions (given the individual potential for the disposition) or can precipitate the action, once the disposition has been formed for whatever reasons—just as LSD may precipitate a psychotic episode when there is a disposition. Since a book hardly ever can be the only influence, or be influential in isolation—it is always a person with previous experiences and pre-existing disposition who is being influenced—its precise quantitative role in causation is hard to trace. But the conclusion that it has *no role* is logically unwarranted and empirically implausible. Nor can one argue reasonably that something else would necessarily have taken the place of books among the causes of action. The drug addict might have become an alcoholic—but not necessarily.

It is strange that the criminal rampage of, say, a deprived Negro in the U.S.A. is easily ascribed to his deprivation. We are told that we are guilty of failing to remedy it, and thus of his acts (and that he is not). But why are we not guilty then of failing to restrict literature, no less logically connected with the rampage of the sadist who read it? In neither case can a direct causal connection be established, or such matters as disposition discounted. In both cases, a causal connection of some sort seems quite likely.

Unless one objects to pornography *per se*, these reflections apply only to sadistic pornography, or to literature that invites non-consensual sexual acts. However, I believe that pornography nearly always leads to sadistic pornography. By definition, pornography de-individualises and dehumanises sexual acts; by eliminating all the contexts it reduces people simply to bearers of impersonal sensations of pleasure and pain. This de-humanisation eliminates the empathy that restrains us ultimately from sadism and non-consensual acts. The cliché-language and the stereotyped situations, the characters not characterised except sexually, are defining characteristics of pornography: the

[2] Certainly Mr. Kenneth Allsop's argument that "vile deeds originated" with non-readers of sadistic books as well, is irrelevant as an argument against eliminating *one* of the possible causes of "vile deeds." So is his remarkable argument that "a far greater number of children are killed by the motor car each year," or "by aerial bombardment." I am against traffic accidents and wars but I do not see why their occurrence argues for not controlling homicidal literature (or for it not being homicidal). Oddly enough, the fact that we have not found expedient means of preventing traffic accidents or wars has not persuaded Messrs. Lambert and Allsop to come out in favour of either; nor do they favour giving up attempts to control them. Yet they both argue as though their belief that no reasonable way of distinguishing and controlling sadistic literature can be found—quite unrealistic in my opinion—shows the undesirability or unnecessariness of attempting to control it. Of course, it merely shows the difficulties facing (possibly the inexpediency of) an enterprise that remains desirable. It is surely easier to get rid of, and as a first step to prohibit, sadistic literature, than to abolish wars and traffic accidents. Although prohibition will not prevent all distribution it will reduce it and deprive it of social approval. The advantage of this must be weighed against likely disadvantages. I find no such pondering in the intemperate, fustian *ex cathedra* rhetoric of Messrs. Lambert and Allsop.

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pornographer avoids distraction from the masturbatory fantasy by avoiding art and humanity. Art may "cancel lust" (as Santayana thought) or sublimate it. The pornographer wants to desublimate it. Those who resort to such fantasies habitually are people who are ungratified by others (for endogenous or external reasons). They seek gratification in using others, in inflicting pain (sometimes in suffering it) at least in their fantasy. In this respect, *The Story of O*, which, itself pornographic, also depicts the (rather self-defeating) outcome of pornographic fantasy, is paradigmatic.

IN A SENSE, pornographic and finally sadistic literature is anti-human. Were it directed against a specific human group—*e.g.* Jews or Negroes—the same libertarian ideologues who now oppose censorship might advocate it. Should we find a little Negro or Jewish girl tortured to death and her death agony taped by her murderers, and should we find the murderers imbued with sadistic anti-Semitic or anti-Negro literature—certainly most liberals would advocate that the circulation of such literature be prohibited. But why should humanity as such be less protected than any of the specific groups that compose it? That the hate articulated is directed against people in general rather than against only Jews or Negroes makes it no less dangerous; on the contrary: it makes it as dangerous to more people.

I DO NOT FORESEE a social organisation which can avoid resentments in individuals or sadistic wishes and fantasies. But we could do better in controlling them by, among other things, censoring the literature that, by offering models and rationalisations fosters their growth and precipitates them into action.

But shouldn't an adult be able to control himself and read without enacting what he knows to be wrong or, at least, illegal? Perhaps he should. But we are not dealing with a homogeneous group called grown-ups (nor is it possible in the American modern environment to limit anything to adults; children and adolescents are not supervised enough—and the authority of their supervisors has been absent far too long—to make that possible). Too many grown-ups are far from the self-restrained healthy type envisaged by democratic theory. They may easily be given a last, or first, push by the literature I would like to see restricted.

Now, if that literature had literary value, we would have to weigh its loss against the importance of avoiding the deleterious influence it may have. We may even be ready to sacrifice some probable victims for the sake of this literary value. But pornographic "literature" is without literary value. It is printed but it is not literature. Hence there is nothing to be lost by restricting it, and there possibly is something to be gained—the lives of the victims who are spared.

There remains the problem of distinguishing pornography from literature. I am convinced that our presumed inability to do so is largely a pretended inability and often pretended in bad faith. But how do you determine what is to be censored? "Lewdness" and "prurience" are matters of opinion; so, therefore, is censorship. Because the power of the censor cannot but be used arbitrarily, by relying on one opinion or another, it endangers the freedom of literature, ultimately of all expression, no less than the license of pornography. Isn't this too high a price to pay?

I don't think we have to pay this price. And, I know of no historical instance where censorship of pornography has endangered freedom in other areas. (The converse does occur, but is irrelevant. Communism or Nazism restricts freedom and *thereupon* censors pornography.) Anyway, a definition of pornography which distinguishes it from literature is neither so nearly impossible a task as some lawyers make it, nor as different from other legal distinctions as they presume. And if we can distinguish pornography from literature we can censor one without restricting the other.

SEVERAL EXTRINSIC AND INTRINSIC qualities set pornography apart. The extrinsic qualities are: (*1*) the intention of the author (or painter, comedian, actor, photographer, editor—or anyone who communicates); (*2*) the use made of his work—the means used to advertise and sell it, the context created for it; (*3*) the actual effect on the consumer.

1. If pornographic intention is admitted or proved by testimony and circumstances, there is no problem. If doubtful, intention must be tested by the intrinsic qualities of the work.

2. Regardless of the author's intent his work may be advertised or sold by stressing its (actual or putative) prurient appeal. By itself this justifies action against the seller only. Yet, although sales tactics are neither sufficient nor necessary to establish the prurient appeal of what is sold, they can be relevant: the image created by the seller may well fuse with the object of which it is an image and have effects on the consumer. Advertisers often claim they achieve this fusion. Sometimes they can—when the object lends itself to it.

3. The actual effect on the consumer—whether "prurient interest" is, or is not, aroused—

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depends on the work, its presentation, and the character of the consumer. A work not intended to be pornographic may nonetheless awaken lust, or have lewd effects; and one intended to do so may fail. Censors must consult not only their own reactions but rely on testimony about probable and prevailing reactions and standards. Pornography, to be such, must be likely to have a prurient or lewd effect. But this effect alone, though necessary, is not sufficient. However, together the three extrinsic qualities certainly are. Any two of them seem quite enough.

These qualities suffice to characterise "hard-core" pornography, which is "hard-core" precisely because it has at least two of these extrinsic qualities—and not much else to confuse matters. But what about works which cannot be classified by means of their extrinsic qualities alone—where effect or intention are mixed, or doubtful? Such works can be dealt with only by exploring the intrinsic qualities which make pornography pornographic.

CHARACTERISTICALLY, pornography, while dreary and repulsive to one part of the normal (most usual) personality, is also seductive to another: it severs sex from its human context (the Id from Ego and Super-ego), reduces the world to orifices and organs, the action to their combinations.

The pornographic reduction of life to varieties of sex is but the spinning out of pre-adolescent fantasies which reject the burdens of reality and individuation, of conflict, commitment, thought, consideration and love, of regarding others as more than objects—a burden which becomes heavier and less avoidable in adolescence. Thus in fantasy a return to the pure libidinal pleasure principle is achieved—and fantasy may regress to even more infantile fears and wishes: people are literally devoured, tortured, mutilated and altogether dehumanised. (Such fantasies are acted out—*e.g.* in concentration camps—whenever authority fails to control, or supports, the impulses it usually helps to repress.)

So much for the content of pornography. It has one aim only: to arouse the reader's lust so that, by sharing the fantasy manufactured for him, he may attain a vicarious sexual experience. Pornography is intended to produce this experience, unlike literature, which aims at the contemplation of experience, at the revelation of its significance. Revelation too is an experience—but one which helps understand and enlarge the possibilities and complexities of the human career—whereas pornography narrows and simplifies them till they are reduced to a series of more or less sophisticated but anonymous (therefore monotonous) sensations.

It is impossible, of course, to serve pornography pure. The vicarious experience must occur through the medium of words, and be depicted in a setting that permits the suspension of disbelief. Yet aesthetic merit would be distracting. To avoid this, pornographers use well-worn and inconspicuous clichés and conventions which do not encumber the libidinous purpose. These qualities are intrinsic to pornography and distinguish it from literature.

SOME lawyers argue that the perception of the intrinsic qualities of pornography in any work depends on literary criticism and is, therefore, a matter of opinion. It seems odd, though, that, in a legal context, serious critics themselves often behave as though they believed criticism to be a matter of opinion. Why be a critic—and teach in universities—if it involves no more than uttering capricious and arbitrary opinions? And if criticism cannot tell pornography from literature what can it tell us? Of course critics may disagree; so do other witnesses, including psychiatrists and handwriting experts. The decision is up to the court; the literary witnesses only have the obligation to testify truthfully as to what is or is not pornography.

Some of the critics who claim that they cannot make the distinction do not wish to because they regard pornography as legitimate; others fear that censorship of pornography may be extended to literature. Whatever the merits of such views, they do not justify testifying that the distinction cannot be made. A witness is not entitled to deny that he saw what he did see, simply to save the accused from a punishment he dislikes. A critic who is really incapable of distinguishing pornography from literature certainly has no business being one; a critic who is capable of making the distinction has no business testifying that he is not.

IMPULSIVELY, I am against both censors and pornographers—but even more am I against one without the other; if you are for either you should be for both. On reflection, I am: both are wanted and they call for each other, as toreros and bulls do, or hunters and game.

Censorship is no less possible nor less needed than pornography. If we indulge pornography, and do not allow censorship to restrict it, our society at best will become ever more coarse, brutal, anxious, indifferent, de-individualised, hedonistic; at worst its ethos will disintegrate altogether.

The self-restrained and controlled individual may exist and function in an environment which

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fosters reasonable conduct—but few such individuals will be created, and they will function less well in an environment where they receive little social support, where sadistic acts are openly held up as models and sadistic fantasies are sold to any purchaser. To be sure, a virtuous man will not commit adultery. But a wise wife will avoid situations where the possibility is alluring and the opportunity available. Why must society lead its members into temptation and then punish them when they do what they were tempted to do?

Ernest van den Haag

London Commentary

Crisis in the Welfare State

Some Sceptical Thoughts — By ARTHUR SELDON

THE Minister of Social Security resigns... the Minister for the Co-ordination of Social Policy flies a large, obtrusive kite... the Chairman of the Parliamentary Labour Party, after resignation as a Minister, speaks his mind on doubts about the Government's social policy... two back-benchers initiate a debate explicitly rejecting Labour's universalism ... the Minister of Labour, with or without the Prime Minister's knowledge, endorses from inside the Cabinet a new principle. These are symptoms of three crises in the welfare state: the failure of government to improve or even maintain its social services—belated recognition by Labour leaders that their welfare philosophy is no longer tenable—a rupture between the Government and its academic advisers.

What has gone wrong?

The theory and philosophy of the state services we collectively describe as "Welfare," mainly education, health, housing, and pensions, are based on the myth that they are or can be free. The myth has been absorbed in the social sciences (except economics), in most journals of opinion, in all political parties. It is the essential reason why state welfare faces debilitation, disintegration, and decay. It persists because policy has for twenty years until the last few months been made with sparse hearing for the inconvenient sceptics who introduce doubts, provoke agonising reappraisals, and endanger intellectual conservatism.

State welfare services take a fifth, some £7,000 million, out of the national income of £34,000 million or about a half of the public sector of £13,000 million. They invade every main facet of personal and public life. They evoke our humanity and compassion; and they reflect our ethics in the scale and aptness of the aid they give neglected children, the disabled, the long-term sick, penurious widows, bewildered families, the impecunious aged. They help to decide the cultural and physical conditions of life in the effectiveness with which they apply limited resources to education, to medical care, to housing, to pensions. They furnish the stuff of local and national politics. They closely affect and are affected by living standards, national finances, balance of payments crises, international wars and rumours of wars.

The education of politicians in office and stubborn economic realities are forcing the diagnosis of the critics of "free" welfare to the forefront of public debate. The sanguine hopes of the 1940s, aroused by Lord Beveridge's visions inflated by sociological wishful thinking and political ambition, have been fermenting into the bitter fruit of stringency for the "submerged," the "deprived," the "disadvantaged," frustration for parents and teachers, patients and doctors, tenants and owner-occupiers, impoverishment for pensioners. In spite of unprecedentedly massive sums spent on state welfare there is *still* not enough; and there never will be. What there is *does not go to people who need it most*. "The language of priorities" bears the dreary accent of political calculation; and the dialogue on poverty between academics and the Labour politicians they once advised has become almost acrimonious.

THERE ARE "solutions" in plenty: *more money*; better administration; more centralised control; increased taxes; more doctors, nurses, teachers; higher pay for ditto; "education" of patients in the "proper" use of doctors and hospitals; "education" of administrators and consultants in the courteous treatment of family doctors and patients; discouragement of emigration; obliga-

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tory employment of state-financed students in the National Health Service or state education; funds from armaments; prohibition or inhibition of independent education, higher charges for private beds in state hospitals; more rent restriction; state control of pension funds; *more money*.

These solutions are mostly pretexts or placebos. Even if they were all practicable they would not remove the central weakness: the pretence that education is "free" for all, that medical care is "free" for all, that housing is partly "free" for millions. Free services are advocated with fervour or resignation for reasons of compassion, administrative convenience, social philosophy, or political practicability. The mixed band with mixed motives ranges from teachers of social administration Professors Brian Abel-Smith, Richard M. Titmuss, and Peter Townsend through Liberal sociologist Miss Nancy Seear to Conservative intellectuals like Sir Edward Boyle. Yet the evil effects of the myth are the common currency of first-year economics: that if you depress a price you inflate the demand and choke off supply. This is the essential reason for shortages and waiting lists, for arrogance and arbitrariness from officials (who ration in the absence of price); for frustration and emigration; for concentration on electorally-sensitive medical services and postponement of hospital-building; not least, for the diversion of purchasing power to pleasurable consumption that moralising politicians can conveniently denounce as candy-floss.

THE SOCIAL POLICY emerging from the myth is deceptively simple. People must have education, medical care, housing, pensions; many people cannot, or will not, pay the price; *ergo*, supply them wholly or partly free; and, for administrative convenience, supply them to *everyone*. This is the solution of the Universalists and the Egalitarians in all three British political parties.

The pretence that the social services are "free" is one of the most deceptive that disfigure British public life. Sir Norman Angell condemned the claim that war really pays as the Great Illusion of the pre-war years. The pretence that people do not pay for welfare is the great illusion of the post-war years. The offer of "free" plastic flowers or dish-cloths by business men advertising soap is derided by British sociologists and *literati* for misleading the housewife. The politician who offers "free" welfare magnifies the offence immeasurably. Even Professor J. K. Galbraith's risible caricature of the industrial corporation that can make the consumer buy what it chooses to produce did not attribute to its directors the altruistic motives professed by sanctimonious politicians.

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The alternative solution to abolishing market prices for welfare is to restore them and enable everyone to pay them.[1] The function of the state in a society that respects the individual is not to organise and provide welfare but to give the purchasing power to people without it, and perhaps to lay down minimum requirements for buyers and minimum standards for sellers. This is the solution of the Selectivists and the Liberals; and again they are to be found in all three parties.

The role of pricing is generally misunderstood by Universalists. The *New Statesman* recently admonished the Minister of Health to maintain the National Health Service "free to all comers," but also to ensure that it continued in being. Astonishingly, there was no hint of recognition that pricing and supply might perhaps be linked. Was Mr. Robinson being asked to run a press-gang in reverse and shanghai intending emigrants? Was he to require hospital house surgeons, nurses, and family doctors to work even longer hours? Was he to organise indentured medical labour gangs from Asia?

Oddly enough Mr. Paul Johnson has shown that he can see the purpose of pricing. He has welcomed the announcement by the Minister of Transport that she was considering road pricing because "it will embody a principle of justice —that people should pay for the trouble they cause and the benefits they receive." He also saw that the main alternative to rationing by price was "a permit system [which] would entail a vast bureaucracy, a probable black market and discrimination. By what criteria," he properly asked, "would you decide which drivers were 'essential' and which not?" Mr. Mervyn Jones saw it even more clearly when he said in the *New Statesman*: "The alternative ... to compulsion ... is to exercise persuasion by price ... to let the motorist decide for himself whether his use of the car is worthwhile *and to make sure that he thinks twice about it.*" (My italics.) Precisely: the "social purpose" of pricing is to make you think twice before using scarce resources and denying them to other uses that may be more urgent or productive. In principle this is as true of education, medical care, housing, pensions, as of roads, land for car-parking, water, or any other commodity or service hitherto supplied "free."

THESE ARE the two basic principles, Universal and Selective, on which British social services will be debated in the coming decade. Mr. Anthony Crosland has said, "The relief ... of distress and the elimination ... of squalor is the main object of social expenditure." This principle puts humanity before equality, selectivity before universalism. It is approved by "individualists," rejected by "socialisers." In practice the selective principle is the only one that will work in a period of rising incomes and growing aspirations. The main objections to it, that it requires identification of people whose incomes require topping up and that some will not ask for aid unless it is shared by all, is a smoke-screen in an intellectual rearguard withdrawal by the Universalists. They are also magnified for party political purposes. But the selective principle does not require the "Household Means Test" that broke up families in the 1930s: means can be identified by an impersonal periodic record of income. The objections lack cogency since a Means Test *is* applied in rate rebates, Council house rent rebates, students' grants, legal aid, the Option Mortgage scheme, and the "income guarantee" by Supplementary Pensions. It has been urged for nursery school fees by Professor A. J. Ayer, Professor D. V. Donnison, and Dr. Michael Young. It is to be applied to an increase in the price of school meals, and it will have to be used by the Government even more if increased help is to be given to families with low incomes because there will simply not be enough public money to give every social benefit to everyone. And by now it must be clear to even the most committed egalitarian that it is foolishly wasteful and inhumane to hand state funds to 100% of the populace in order to make sure that the 10%, or 15%, or 20%, who need it get it.

The argument on "social divisiveness" may, if it is not rebutted, become as stubborn an obstacle to clear thinking and humane reform as the means test. It was put recently by a journalist with Universalist sympathies but an open mind, Mr. Rudolf Klein, in the *Observer*: The fundamental objection, he said, to allowing people to pay for welfare services privately was that it would introduce a double standard, one for the rich, one for the poor, because the middle classes who would leave the welfare state are those most anxious to raise standards.[2] On the contrary, it is state welfare services that would be "socially divisive" because they cannot, outside rigidly totalitarian societies, be made completely universal. No degree of comprehensivation of secondary schooling in Britain, or "integration" of private with state schools, would prevent some families from giving their children a better formal education

[1] Practicable methods in medical care are outlined in articles in the *Lancet*, March 1967, and the *British Medical Journal*, July 1967.

[2] The middle classes who use state services get what they can for themselves, often at the expense of the working classes. It is an illusion to suppose that there is one standard in state education or the N.H.S.

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than the state provides, either because their income is higher or because they prefer to spend more on education and less on eating, clothing, smoking, drinking, motoring, or holidaying. No discouragement to private medical care will prevent some families from seeking more choice, convenience, privacy, or comfort in sickness than is provided by the National Health Service. No encouragement to Council building or discouragement of Council house purchase by tenants, or inhibition of the building societies, will prevent some families from finding better homes than others think worth paying for. No degree of expansion in state pensions will prevent many people from accumulating more for their retirement than they are compelled to accumulate by (and through) the state.

If the Universalists believe otherwise, let them say that no man shall be able to buy better education, medical care, housing or a standard of life in retirement than the state can provide for all out of taxation. And then let them show that the Universalist welfare state is more than an egalitarian mirage by drafting the apparatus of controls required to create and enforce it at rising standards financed by increasing taxation: rules governing personal expenditure, inspected and policed; direction (and dilution) of labour for teachers, doctors, and nurses; the penalties of political displeasure and social disapproval of tax avoidance, even by restricting work in favour of leisure; increasingly savage penalties for tax evasion; control or prohibition of emigration.

IT IS DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE that the Universalists accept or can practise the logic of their philosophy. They must find it especially difficult when rising incomes facilitate and encourage growing social aspirations; and even more difficult when they see communist countries resort to pricing in welfare: Russia charges for nursery schools, Czechoslovakia imposes health prescriptions charges, Poland changes from housing subsidies to housing allowances to families to enable them to pay market rents, Russian doctors advocate charges for hospitals. Do the Universalists really suppose that the notion of equality in state welfare, as a lowest common denominator, will be freely accepted by wage-earners accustomed to rising standards in everyday consumption?

Many Universalists earn middling or above-middling incomes of £2,000 to £5,000 or more as academics, writers, journalists, civil servants, lawyers, doctors, politicians. If they send their children to state schools, occupy state hospital beds when ill, live in subsidised Council or

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rent-restricted houses, and refrain from private saving for retirement in order to avoid privilege and share in parity of esteem, what do they do with their money? And if they buy books, records, go to concerts, the opera, live in spacious houses, entertain interesting people, holiday abroad, how do they prevent their children from deriving educational, social or cultural advantages denied the child of the plumber, the boilermaker, the railwayman? Do they really prevent their wives from seeing Harley Street doctors? Do they really buy the furniture and furnishings common in Council houses? Do they really avoid saving to supplement the state pension? Do they really reject scholarships or free places at public schools? How do they spend their money on goods and services that yield no social privilege? And if they perform this feat in their lifetime, how do they avoid advantaging their children when they are dead?

The notion that state welfare can ever be completely universal is a chimera. At the best it will fight a gradually losing rearguard action against rising incomes, a man's natural wish to do better for his family than he had in his lifetime, the family's concern to subsidise its weaker members and shelter them from the competition of the meritocracy, and the foreign example of countries in Europe, Australasia and America that permit growing incomes to yield widening choice.

A system that sets out to provide state welfare universally will, in any society, capitalist or communist, have to permit growing "social divisiveness." But there is a method of creating social parity of esteem. It is to give purchasing power selectively to people who are in need in order to enable them to exert the authority of those who are not. State benefits in cash or coupon would enable everyone—wage-earner as well as salary-earner—to act as a buyer with enough purchasing power in the market to pay for education, medical care, housing or pensions from competing state, local authority, benevolent, charitable, "mutual" or commercial suppliers. Every man and woman would in time appear as a buyer, not a "beneficiary." Social origin and accent would become irrelevant. The market is tone-deaf. Such a system would remove the social divisiveness in the pseudo-Universalist system between the few who pay for a choice and the many who receive free state services with no option. The physically or mentally incapable who could not use cash or coupons would need services in kind or personal care; they are the helpless unavoidable in any society. Everyone else would be buying and paying for welfare with choice. Everyone would be a school fee-paying parent, a private patient, a tenant paying market rents, or an owner-occupier buying a home. In a market the discriminating, articulate, "middle-class" consumers (who subscribe to *Which?* and *Where?*) would keep up standards for the "working-class" consumers (who do not) in welfare as they now do in food, footwear, and furniture.

AND THEY WOULD DO so much more effectively than in Parent-Teacher or Patients' Associations because withdrawal of custom and loss of profits is a more powerful sanction for the supplier in competition than political agitation by captive customers is for politicians, civil servants, Councillors, local education officers, regional hospital boards, headmasters, Council housing managers, or directors of hospitals.

THE ACADEMIC and the political Universalists have been rethinking welfare policy. The academics have come up with little new except more detailed evidence of poverty, a new emphasis on deprivation as relative rather than absolute, and no new solutions to two dilemmas: the conflict between *equal* benefits and *humane* benefits, and the scope for choice in state welfare. At the 1966 Fabian lectures, by what the *Guardian* has called "the poverty lobby," Professor Townsend combined a complaint that Labour had not done enough for people in need with a demand that it should give more aid to all and sundry. He has never explained how he reconciles humanity with equality, and his claim that there is general public rejection of Means Tests is wishful thinking.

Professor Titmuss' contribution was puzzling. His lecture had been billed as "Choice in the Welfare State." His approach hitherto suggested that he might argue that choice in welfare services was unnecessary or that it was desirable but that it could be provided by the state. At the opening of his lecture he announced that he would speak on "Choice *and* the Welfare State." But he spoke mainly about the "liberal economists" and the alleged inadequacy of their system for providing choice. There was still no demonstration that choice was not important or, if it was, that it could be provided by the state.

Professor Abel-Smith did much better in the third part of his lecture, as his 1965 Fabian Tract *Freedom in the Welfare State* suggested he might do. The first part was a complaint that Labour had slowed down the rate of increase in expenditure on the social services below its rate under the Conservatives. Even the increase of 28% for 1964 to 1970 in the National Plan, disembalmed for the evening, was lower than

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the Conservatives' 34·5% for 1958 to 1964. How to find the money for more state welfare? Easy: raise taxes. He does not see that choice in welfare might itself encourage effort and yield tax revenue. The second part was another complaint that Britain was spending proportionately less on social welfare than countries with smaller national incomes. He did not consider the reasons for these shortcomings: do they really lie in the mendacity of Conservative and Labour politicians? The third part contained, it seemed, a new note: the admission, at long last, that universal "free" benefits could not continue: perhaps the state might charge fees for some of its services and replace students' grants by loans.

But there was no effort to show how choice, the case for which he had recognised in *Freedom in the Welfare State*, could be ensured in state welfare. Recently he has conceded that in the end the solution is "to concentrate help where it is needed and to stop giving it where it is not." But this system requires Means Tests; there are "administrative snags" in Means Tests, so for a decade until they are solved higher benefits should be given to all. The case for Universalism has thus toppled from a philosophic principle to a technical convenience. Now perhaps the debate can concentrate on how to devise the simplest, least inquisitive technique for identifying income and needs.

THE POLITICAL UNIVERSALISTS have shown more wisdom. First, Mr. Douglas Houghton, then Mr. Brian Walden and Mr. Desmond Donnelly (and now Mr. Ray Gunter) have virtually abandoned Universalism and embraced Selectivity though not without ambiguity and reluctant compromise that may prove impracticable. The academics are now in a quandary. Professor Titmuss' formula, "an infrastructure of Universalist services . . . within and around which can be developed socially acceptable selective services" is an attempt to save the academic argument but concedes its invalidity and impracticability. It is hardly tenable to argue that social benefits should be both equal and unequal. If selectivity is noxious or offensive, it should be avoided; if it is acceptable there is no argument for retaining universalism to avoid the social stigma.

His most recent formulation, in a forthcoming book, *Commitment to Welfare*, is ingenious but abortive. It is to combine universalist services with selective services based on "the *needs* of specific categories, groups and territorial areas and not dependent on *individual tests of means*" (his italics). But the composition of categories and

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groups changes: "Council house tenants" now includes people who are not in need of subsidy, and many who should have the subsidy are not Council house tenants. "Territorial areas" designated for state aid would contain people who do not need it, and others who do would live elsewhere. There is no escape: universal benefits must be replaced by benefits matched to the circumstances not of "groups" or "areas" but of *individual people*.

Professor John Vaizey has demonstrated the dilemma of the Universalists in pointing (in a recent *Spectator*) to the "grave internal contradiction" in "the ideology of equality, an ideology to which I subscribe," of concentrating education on the able and on the deprived. The progressives and the egalitarians do not seem to be able to make up their minds whether they wish to open the world to the gifted child or to rescue the ungifted from his environment. Their dilemma is even worse than that: by wanting to make the comprehensive school a monopoly rather than an experiment, and by limiting the expenditure on education to the revenue that can be raised in taxes, they are putting equality before quality. The tragedy in their position is that there is no need for this unpalatable choice. It is possible to raise the minimum education that could be made available for *all* children by allowing parents who value it more to pay for more in the market. The egalitarians are not only inhibiting the gifted; they are also repressing the ungifted.

But the notion that people who value welfare and who can pay for it *should* pay is spreading. Mr. David Marquand, Dr. David Owen, and Professor John Mackintosh tentatively acknowledge ("Change Gear," *Socialist Commentary*) the relevance of selectivity for concentrating resources on people in most need and the case, in principle, for welfare charges. In their anxiety to recognise economic reality but not to abandon their philosophic moorings they strain after both but risk emerging with neither. They see that taxation is not always a better method of financing welfare than charges, and that users may be more willing to pay if they see a connection between payment and service, but they confuse the *purpose* and the *effect* of charging. They want charges but not if they "deter." But charges necessarily deter, and they should deter—that is how they husband resources and minimise waste. The solution is not to avoid charges but to enable people in need to pay them by supplements to income.

A decisive defect of the Universalist principle is that it is *inhumane*. It gives cake to people with cake and denies a second loaf to those with one. Some universal benefits, pensions, for example, are taxed: even so, much remains with the well-off and wealthy (pensions are taxed as earned income). But some benefits are not taxed at all. A state education is worth £280 a year to a family with two children at a secondary school, £560 if in a sixth form; medical care is worth perhaps £80–£100 a year to a family of four; Council housing £60 a year or more. Hundreds of millions of pounds remain in such pockets that could be distributed in larger family allowances, widows' grants, disablement benefit, retirement pensions to people in need.

Some Universalists support the inhumane system because of a political fallacy: that social benefits must be equal and shared by all. For Professor Titmuss "the real argument is about equality." *But equal treatment of people in unequal circumstances is not equality*. It satisfies the yearning for equality less than a selective system which would relate aid to need.

Nor can the Universalist principle be maintained by higher tax yields out of rising incomes and faster economic growth. This was the doctrine propounded at the 1964 and 1966 elections; and it is implied by foreign example in writings from the National Institute of Economic and Social Research and from the Economics Correspondent of *The Times Business News*. There is no evidence that as incomes rise people will readily yield the increases to the state for enlarged collective welfare (or any other) services. Governments in political democracies may devise new taxes on employment, corporations or wealth; but they have yet to show that they can extract more than 40 to 45% of total incomes—even in wartime. And the contrast with European countries that spend more on state welfare despite lower national incomes demonstrates no more than that state welfare is desirable precisely where incomes are low—and provided they are unequal enough to furnish some large enough for redistributive taxation. State welfare should recede as living standards rise. It becomes increasingly superfluous.

British social policy since 1964 amply demonstrates the fiscal limits to state welfare when taxation is high. It is easy to ask for more state benefits but not to show how to raise the additional taxes. To his credit Professor Abel-Smith did not resort in his Fabian lecture to the too easy option of reduced armaments. The amount that could be saved by reduction in the £2,250 million defence bill would not provide the vast sums required to raise the amount and quality of the social services to the level required for the most needy, still less to satisfy rising expectations, so long as they must be provided for

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everyone. It is the universality and "free"-dom of state welfare that remains the fundamental weakness of the British welfare state.

THE LATEST EFFORT to find tax revenue has passed from unchanged tax rates on rising incomes to higher taxation of static incomes. The Universalists would like higher family allowances (for all) to be financed by lower income tax allowances for children. This clumsy proposal confuses aid for the needy with the equity of the taxation system as a whole. But its significance is that it illustrates the dire straits of the Universalists. The politicians will have to recognise what the social administrators cannot see: that economic causes have political and fiscal consequences: Ossa cannot be piled on Pelion for all time. There is not much more room for adding taxes on personal incomes. Ingenuity in avoiding and evading taxes is not yet exhausted.

THE MORE the Universalists succeed in defining poverty as deprivation relative to the *average* living standard, and the more the state aid for which they argue, the larger become the sums required to provide universal social benefits, and the more impossible to apply the Universalist principle. In their study of 1953–54 and 1960 household budgets, *The Poor and the Poorest*, Professors Abel-Smith and Townsend came perilously close to the schoolboy howler that triumphantly demonstrates half the population to be less than the average.

A further dilemma of the Universalists is that the more they demonstrate the poverty of the large family, of the long-term sick, or other groups, the more inextricably they are caught in the *non sequitur* of arguing from particular need to general aid. Mrs. Dorothy Cole-Wedderburn and Mr. John Utting in 1962 usefully analysed *The Economic Circumstances of Old People* and showed that many were in need; yet they concluded that the state pension should be raised for all retired pensioners, among whom half the couples (we now learn from the 1966 Ministry of Pensions survey) have an income of £10 or more a week.

UNTIL RECENTLY, the common conclusions favoured universal state benefits. The appearance of a change in all three parties is therefore significant.

In Labour it seems to have begun in 1962 with the admonition by Young Fabians of their elders to reject the "utterly naïve" notion that the basic state pension could ever be raised sufficiently to take all pensioners off National Assistance and to see that some form of Means Test was unavoidable. Not long after, Mr. Douglas Houghton announced that Labour was studying a method of measuring means by an income coding. In a modified form it has now been applied in the guaranteed income grants of the Supplementary Benefits Commission, the reincarnation of the National Assistance Board. But instead of being in front of Labour Party thinking in opposition, Labour's social security seedsmen are now *behind* Labour thinking in office. There was silence when a questioner at Professor Townsend's Fabian lecture said (I paraphrase from memory) that Socialists used to regard universal benefits as required for socialism but that perhaps benefits should now be matched with need. To judge from these lectures, and Mr. R. H. S. Crossman's spirited reply to them, the social administrators who have advised Labour badly seem themselves in some disarray. Titmuss wants to combine Universalism and Selectivity; Townsend remains a Universalist; Abel-Smith has evidently become a Selectivist in principle. The government, after its initial errors of raising the pension and abolishing the prescription charges for the rich, will find itself having to become more selectivist in social benefits, and to find ways of reconciling its supporters to Means Tests. But the Prime Minister will have to find something better than Titmuss' internal contradiction.

THE LIBERAL PARTY'S spokesman on social security in the House of Commons, Mr. John Pardoe, has quickly seen the incongruity of universal social benefits and rising incomes. And at the 1966 Liberal Assembly he made no bones about the common sense of abandoning opposition to a Means Test.

In spite of one of the least unsordid acts in recent social policy, the 1961 graduated state pension (introduced to raise revenue without the unpopularity of a tax and to dish Labour), the Conservatives are also increasingly accepting the second half of the 20th century and are promising to reconstruct the welfare state to give more aid to the needy. Younger Tories like Geoffrey Howe and John Biffen are streets ahead of their elders, and Sir Keith Joseph is revealing a subtle and sensitive mind.

THE CHANGE from universal to selective benefits is impeded by a variant of the equality principle that ranges from a wholesome rebellion against privilege to a little-minded indulgence in envy. It ordains that no one shall have anything—better schooling, nursing, housing—unless and until everyone can have it. It is as potent a precept as any for postponing the day when all can have it. What is at stake is more than the blunting of incen-

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tives to individuals to earn more for their families, or indeed the role of the family in social life. It is even more than the logical dilemma of the egalitarian who is prepared to allow some inequality in income after taxation but no inequality in expenditure on education, medical care, even housing, and is content to see vast sums go to everyday consumption. The dilemma of the Egalitarian is that insistence on equality is insistence on *less than that possible for all*. Luton Council has told parents that a shortage of teachers prevents its schools from taking children at five; they must wait until they are six. Rebellious parents sought out local former teachers prepared to take their children for a year. The Council's Education Officer objected that no five-year-olds could have the teaching because all could not have it. If welfare services are to be organised by public authority on the principle "nobody until everybody," then everybody will have less than they could have and wait longer for more.

There is a further difficulty for the Egalitarians. If no one may move up in earning or spending income until all move up, there may be no movement at all. Example and demonstration are the *conditio sine qua non* of improvement. If no one may have something *different* which can be considered *better*, movement will be stultified. Equality is an idea reserved for a world without scarcity. Lenin saw it in *State and Revolution*; and John Strachey saw it in his Left Book Club era of the 1930s, although he was naïvely sanguine about the imminence of superabundance.[3] But even if Utopia is still far off and differences in earnings are unavoidable and (in the Marxist phrase) socially necessary, we can top up the lower ones and make them *less unequal* bundles of purchasing power. To add to all of them in the name of equality, social cohesion, or parity of esteem, is to add champagne to the rich man's table and shinbone to the pensioner's.

SOONER or later enough people in the Labour, Liberal, and Conservative parties will see that three basic aims in welfare are within our grasp: humanity, liberty, and relative plenty. We could within a few years give much more help to the needy, create choice for all capable of using it, and secure much more expenditure on welfare out of the national income. But all three parties will have to abandon their conservatism and think more radically and adventurously. Labour will have to abandon its false egalitarianism, the Liberals their out-dated Beveridgism (which Beveridge himself might have abandoned), the Conservatives their propensity to ape anything that seems momentarily fashionable or expedient.

The notion that change in the welfare state is "politically impossible" has been blown sky-high by the field surveys of public attitudes and preferences in the last four years conducted by Mass Observation for the Institute of Economic Affairs, largely confirming or confirmed by surveys by Dr. Mark Abrams for *Socialist Commentary* in 1960, by Mr. W. G. Runciman in 1962 (discussed in *Relative Deprivation and Social Justice* in 1966), by *New Society* in 1963, by the National Opinion Polls in 1966, and by newspaper polls in the last few months. The findings of the IEA research are that there is no majority political preference for universal social benefits irrespective of needs. On the contrary, it has found that half or more of the varying samples of the population would favour social benefits related to need. The survey by Mass Observation (for the I.E.A.) in June 1966 found that 53% of the sample of men and women thought that free health prescriptions should be confined to people in need, 57% family allowances, 73% subsidised Council houses, and 38% increases in state pensions.[4] A survey in April 1967 found that 65% of a national sample said they would be more ready to pay taxes if their money went to people in need than if it went to all and sundry.

There is no insurmountable political obstacle to a change in welfare policy that could give more to people in need, choice to everyone as soon as they could use it, and more welfare all round. It could, I believe, be achieved by reform in four stages.

Stage I, in which all social benefits, in kind as well as in cash, would be taxed. This gradual closing of the gap between "free" state services and full market fees for private services would ease:

Stage II, in which fees from people who could pay them would be charged for state services, the scope for charges widening in:

Stage III, in which cash (for coupons) would be distributed to enable everyone to pay for welfare, state or private:

Stage IV, in which taxation would be reduced and cash allowances or coupons gradually withdrawn. The stages would be reached at

[3] In a letter to me in 1938 he thought that scarcity would be abolished by the 1970s. He can hardly be blamed for making the same mistake as Keynes in failing to see that growing supply would stimulate demand, and that rising living standards still require a pricing system to share out spreading affluence; the Russians and the East now know better.

[4] The findings are detailed and alternative policies discussed in Seldon and Gray, *Social Benefits: Universal or Selective?* Research Monograph 8, Institute of Economic Affairs, 1967.

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varying rates in different services, and some bypassed or telescoped.

The philosophy of "free" state welfare is based on jejune sentimentality about human affairs that does no credit to the common sense or practical judgment of the academics, the *literati*, the doctors, teachers, lawyers, or the politicians who profess it. In the conduct of their private affairs they reject the assumption that human beings will not try to get as much as they can for nothing, or are not concerned about personal, private, family interests, or that to appoint a man a public official is to transform him into a selfless public benefactor. Yet they persist in espousing a system of universal benefits because it satisfies their yearning for a pseudo-egalitarianism, because it assuages their guilty conscience about inherited or acquired wealth and social advantages, or because, contrariwise, it offers the prospect of political power in aggrandisement of the state. And all this in spite of its denial of help for the neglected, the sick, the suffering, the bewildered, and the aged, its denial of the liberty to choose, its incitement to spend on everyday consumption.

The U.S.A. is installing state welfare just when we are learning its defects, but Socialist and Communist countries are having second thoughts despite a political philosophy that requires universal benefits. Young men—and unclosed minds—avid for change should look East. The welfare state in Britain reached its present shape in the last twenty years. The longer it is left unchanged the more convulsive the upheavals when change is enforced by rising incomes, growing social aspirations, and overseas example.

International Commentary

The Flickering Lamp

By Louis J. Halle

FOR SEVERAL years now, most of us have been uncertain whether we should regard "the Cold War" as over or not. The answer depends in part on how we define the term. In a history of the Cold War that I finished writing in the spring of 1966,[1] I chose to define it narrowly as simply a spasm in a continuing conflict between Russia and the West that had been going on for centuries. The occasion for the spasm had been the rapid westward expansion of Russian power in the conclusion of World War II, and the fear that this expansion would continue across the temporarily prostrate countries of western Europe until it reached the Channel. Just as Britain had always considered any hegemony on the opposite shore of the Channel as incompatible with its security, and had always intervened to prevent it, so in the 20th century the United States had come to regard any hegemony on the opposite shore of the Atlantic as incompatible with its security, and had fought two world wars to prevent it. At the end of the second, in 1945, it had begun to withdraw its power from Europe, as it had at the end of the first; but now the alarm aroused by the threatened hegemony of Russia prompted it to reverse the process. So it was that the Cold War began.

In my narrow definition, then, the Cold War was one in a succession of struggles over the balance of power that, although involving the whole world, had its fulcrum in Europe. This particular spasm in a continuing conflict, it seemed to me, came to an end with the Cuban missile-crisis of October 1962. Like most observers, I regarded that crisis as the product of a Russian manoeuvre to oust the Western allies from Berlin, for the successful emplace-

[1] *The Cold War as History*. Chatto & Windus, London; Harper & Row, New York, 1967.

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ment of a long-range nuclear armament in Cuba might have been expected to intimidate the American nation that, with its allies, had so far been withstanding Russian pressure on that city. With the failure of the manoeuvre, it seemed to me, Moscow had resigned itself to an acceptance of the European status quo. By that time, in any case, western Europe had recovered, Russian power had fallen back from Austria, Albania, and Yugoslavia, and the essential balance had been restored. The Cold War, as I defined it, was over.

IF I HAD CHOSEN to define it more widely, I would not have considered that it was over. For instance, if I had defined it as the struggle between the world called "Communist" and the world called "free," then the present conflict between the United States and China would obviously represent its continuation. By my narrower definition, however, it does not.

From the beginning I have thought of the Sino-American conflict as essentially separate from the conflict between Russia and the West. However, the popular disposition during the 1950s, especially in the United States, to regard the new régime on the Chinese mainland as a Russian satellite, and to regard Mao Tse-tung as merely an agent of Russian imperialism, got us into the habit, which persists still, of equating the struggle against Mao's China with the Cold War of my narrower definition. In 1950, when Washington first began to intervene against Ho Chi Minh in Viet Nam, it stated explicitly that it was doing so in implementation of its policy of containing "Soviet imperialism." Even at the time, this surely represented a misconception, one that can no longer be entertained today by any informed person. Today, however, Washington's commitment to intervention in Viet Nam, deepening for more than a decade-and-a-half, has at last gone beyond the point of no return. This represents the essence of tragedy, and it may well be that the historian of a distant future will view it with more compassion than is possible for us.

THERE ARE a number of reasons why it is difficult and, to some extent, impossible to have as just a view of one's present as must some day be possible to the historian who looks back upon it. The partisanship that goes with involvement is one reason. Another is the unavailability, for the present, of essential information in the archives of governments.

To take an example—throughout the 1950s we assumed that the surprise attack by the North Koreans on South Korea, in June 1950, represented a Russian initiative undertaken with the prior knowledge of Mao Tse-tung's government in Peking. Mao had been in Moscow from mid-December to mid-February, and if one assumed relations of loyalty between him and Stalin it was inconceivable that he should not have been made privy to the Russian plans for Korea. The redeployment of Chinese armies from the south to Manchuria and Shantung, which began in April, seemed to confirm this, since it could plausibly be interpreted as a move to "back-stop" the North Korean forces that were soon to attempt the conquest of South Korea. Today, however, some of us are tempted to speculate that Peking was not informed at all of the intention to conquer South Korea, and that the purpose of the redeployment was to reassert China's traditional claims in an area, dominated by Russia since 1945, that for the best part of a century had been the scene of bitter Sino-Russian rivalry. The historian of the future will have to reach a conclusion with respect to these alternative interpretations. Unlike us, however, he may have access to conclusive documentation, perhaps to the official Russian or Chinese records of Mao's negotiations in Moscow.

However, the most fundamental reason why we cannot have a just and final view of developments in our own time is that we cannot know in advance to what ends they may be leading. Events derive their historical significance from their consequences, which may be long delayed. President Monroe's remarks, in 1823, about the separation of the New World from the power politics of the Old, did not have doctrinal status for decades after he made them. It was Americans of a later generation who, discovering and resurrecting them, gave them their latter-day importance, which no contemporary of Monroe could have anticipated. Again in 1946 it seemed that the Russian attempt to take northern Iran might have the historical importance of the assassination at Sarajevo in 1914, but because it came to nothing it is, instead, all but forgotten today.

Writing in the winter of 1965–66, I ended my own history of the Cold War (except for an Epilogue added, later, at the suggestion of my American publisher) with the statement that, less than a year after President Kennedy's assassination, "Khrushchev himself would at last be removed from office by his associates, who in defiance of a long tradition would attempt to set up in Russia a legitimate and sober government that, taking account of the responsibility imposed by nuclear power, would avoid the dangerous excesses of Stalin and Khrushchev alike." More than a year after I had written that (less than three months after its publication in England, and still over three months before it was to be published in the

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States), the régime to which I had attributed the intention of avoiding Stalin's and Khrushchev's excesses committed itself to an adventure in the Middle East that seemed to me hardly less reckless than Khrushchev's adventure in Cuba. It committed itself in outspoken terms to the cause of Arab states that had officially proclaimed a "holy war" against Israel, and that had publicly avowed the objective of destroying it.[2] The general expectation, which must have been shared in Moscow, was that the Arab forces, many times stronger than the Israeli forces in the statistical elements of military power, would quickly overcome and occupy Israel, thereby putting themselves in a position to "destroy the Zionist presence in the Arab homeland" (as the Syrian Defence Minister had formulated the objective). The circumstances make it plausible that the victorious Arabs would then have engaged in what was tantamount to genocide against the Israeli population. It is hard to see how, while that was going on, the United States, Britain, and others could have stood aside, how they could have refrained from massive intervention against the Arabs on whose side Moscow had ranged itself. To my mind, mankind would then have come closer to World War III than it had in October 1962.[3]

ALL THIS WAS AVERTED by the prompt and complete victory of the Israelis, which was sealed in a matter of hours. Today, however, in the light of this episode, I would be more cautious in attributing a sober self-restraint to Mr. Khrushchev's successors. More than that, Moscow's abrupt attempt to extend its power over the eastern Mediterranean, and perhaps North Africa as well, has diminished the credibility of my view that the spasmodic struggle for the balance of power in Europe is over. I think it unlikely but not impossible that what the record of history will show is a renewed spasm, now, in the never-ending, centuries-old struggle between Russia and the West. What makes me think it unlikely is chiefly the fact that the Chinese challenge to Russia, which seems to me great and permanent, will presumably cause Moscow to avoid embroiling itself in the West. But I have to grant that the Middle Eastern adventure has given this argument no support at all. Reality is always more complex than our formulations of it.

IN A LARGE SENSE, time future combines with time past to afford a perspective in which the developments of any present assume their true significance. Up to the end of June 1950, those few Americans in Washington who were familiar with the centuries-old history of conflict between Russia and China along their 4,500 miles of boundary, and who knew how ever since 1927 Mao had been considered a heretic by the orthodox in Moscow, maintained that the appearance of solidarity between Mao's

[2] The Egyptian Ministry of Religious Affairs on 19 May 1967 ordered the country's religious leaders to preach a *jihad* or holy war against Israel. On 21 May the Syrian Defence Minister said that Syria's armed forces were ready "to take the initiative in . . . destroying the Zionist presence in the Arab homeland." On 26 May, President Nasser of Egypt stated that if war came it would be total and the objective would be "to destroy Israel." The Arab governments were insisting that a state of war with Israel already existed; and they were, accordingly, conducting both a boycott and a partial blockade.

[3] The point of this note is exemplified by the fact that, since the above paragraph was written, a month after the Arab-Israeli War, commentators have generally concluded that, when the crisis actually came, Moscow played a restraining role behind the scenes. The fact remains, however, that Moscow had put dangerous weapons into the hands of the Arabs, and when they had then brandished those weapons it had publicly pledged its support for their cause.

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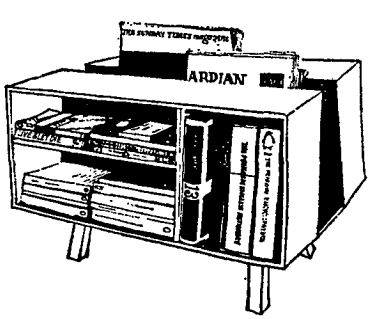

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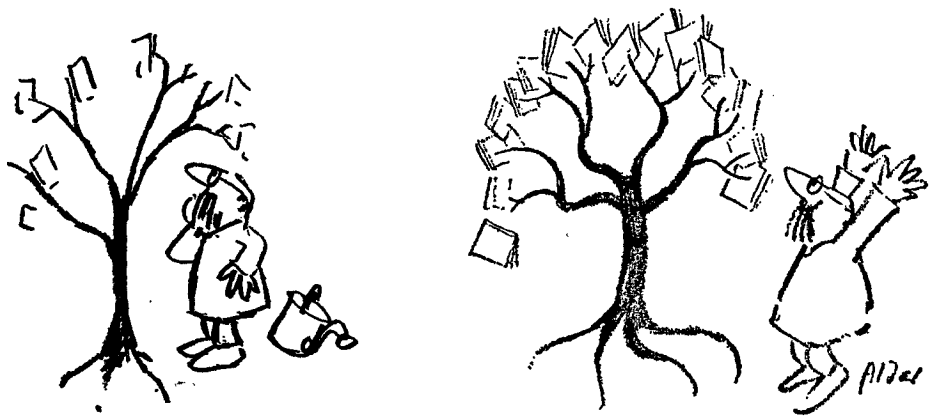

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China and Moscow was largely illusory. That Secretary of State Acheson did not take the appearance for the reality is clear from his address of 12 January 1950 to the National Press Club in Washington. "We must not," he said, "undertake to deflect from the Russians to ourselves the righteous anger and the wrath, and the hatred of the Chinese people which must develop."

Throughout the remainder of the 1950s, those who had held this view were castigated by all commentators in the United States, and generally throughout the West, for the colossal error of judgment that it was said to represent. After the attack on the Republic of Korea and the American naval intervention in the Straits of Formosa (which did finally deflect "the righteous anger and the wrath, and the hatred of the Chinese people") it was regarded as definitely disproved.

Then, at the beginning of the 1960s, the permanent Sino-Soviet conflict, which had only been smoothed over and hidden from public view, came out into the open; and Moscow was again found to be maintaining, as Stalin and Molotov had in 1944, that Mao was not a real Communist.

No one in the second half of the 20th century can say who is and who is not a "real" Communist. For Communism is not a static doctrine but a movement, and one that has ramified in many directions since it germinated, more than a century ago, from its seed, *The Communist Manifesto* of Marx and Engels. Today, in fact, it has become not one movement but many; and even in Marx's lifetime its disparate transformations had gone so far that at last he was impelled to declare that he, himself, was certainly not a Marxist. If Marx was not a Marxist, who is? And what is a "real" Communist? Was Stalin one? Is Mao?

The Communist Revolution that the *Manifesto* prophesied was a revolution to be made in an advanced stage of bourgeois industrial society by an industrial proletariat that had come to constitute "the immense majority" of the population. Such a revolution has not occurred anywhere, certainly not in the Russia of 1917 (nor does it threaten to occur in Viet Nam today). In 1927, Mao turned against Moscow's authority and, in defiance of it, proceeded to organise a peasant rebellion in the primitive agricultural society that China then was, and still largely is. This was not in accordance with anything that Marx, or Lenin after him, had set down in the Communist scriptures. From Moscow's point of view it was both heretical and schismatic. There were grounds, then, for saying, as one commonly did, that Mao was an "agrarian reformer" rather than a "real" Communist. In the 1940s one felt free to cite

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Stalin's description of Mao as a "margarine" Communist; and there was no public outcry when the American Secretary of State, Mr. James F. Byrnes, referred to Mao's Party as "the so-called Communists."[4]

However, after Mao achieved power in 1949 and went to Moscow to patch up his quarrel with Stalin, if he could, the outcry against those who had been so gullible as to believe that he was not a "real" Communist rang through the West, and in Washington a purge of China experts ensued.

The re-emergence of Mao's quarrel with Moscow into public view, at the end of the 1950s, once more cast the whole situation in a new light. Yet even as late as 1964, when his distinguished history of the Korean War was published, as able a chronicler as Mr. David Rees was assuming, as if history had proved it, that the Truman Administration had been wrong both in its assumption that Mao was a questionable Communist and in its assumption that the appearance of solidarity between the two nominally Communist régimes had little substance.[5]

No one can be sure, today, how we will view these matters in the 1970s. The "verdict of history" on particular situations is bound to change as the passage of time alters perspectives and brings formerly hidden circumstances into view. This was never better said than by Winston Churchill when, as Prime Minister of an embattled Britain, he spoke to the House of Commons in tribute to his predecessor, Neville Chamberlain, with whose judgments he had disagreed so completely, on the occasion of Chamberlain's death in November 1940:

> It is not given to human beings, happily for them, for otherwise life would be intolerable, to foresee or to predict to any large extent the unfolding course of events. In one phase men seem to have been right, in another they seem to have been wrong. Then again, a few years later, when the perspective of time has lengthened, all stands in a different setting. There is a new proportion. There is another scale of values. History with its flickering lamp stumbles along the trail of the past, trying to reconstruct its scenes, to revive its echoes, and kindle with pale gleams the passion of former days. . . .

[4] Testimony before Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 7 December 1945.

[5] *Korea: The Limited War* (1964), pp. 30 and 114. It may be an oversimplification to say that the Truman Administration made the flat assumptions about Mao's validity as a Communist, and about Sino-Russian solidarity, that Mr. Rees attributes to it. The winter of 1949–50 was a time of uncertainty and reassessment in Washington.

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METHUEN

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Two Questions about Viet Nam

By Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.

I MUST FIRST declare an interest. I am a contributor to this volume,[1] and I regard the widening of the war in Viet Nam as ghastly folly. However, the book has 259 contributors; and, if everyone were disqualified who is quoted in it or otherwise has an opinion on the Viet Nam conflict, the book might never be reviewed at all.

It is modelled, of course, on *Authors Take Sides on the Spanish War* of thirty years ago. Following the example of Nancy Cunard, Auden, Spender, Aragon and their associates in 1937, Messrs. Woolf and Bagguley in 1966 circulated a Viet Nam questionnaire to writers around the world—about 600 of them, if one works out the listing on page x, or closer to 750, if one goes by the footnote on the same page reporting a "pattern of one-third of those canvassed replying." The non-respondents are not named. All this editorial industry is commendable and impressive. But the editing itself is in crucial respects exasperating.

The questionnaire put two questions:

Are you for, or against, the intervention of the United States in Vietnam?
How, in your opinion, should the conflict in Vietnam be resolved?

It can be reasonably urged, I think, that the formulation of the first question prejudges the issue (if a good deal less than the comparable questions of 1937). The editors themselves concede that the word *intervention* might appear "to have a moral flavour, derogatory to the United States." But, having considered and rejected *involvement* and *presence*, they could think of no other substitute. In retrospect, they say a little belligerently that they "have no apologies" for the phrasing.

When I answered the questionnaire, I was tempted to object to this first question but eventually decided to pass it by. The Greek writer Nikos Athanassiadis took it up, however, and he makes the point sensibly: "When the legitimate government of a country appeals for help against the revolutionary plot of a minority trying to impose itself by force, then I cannot see why this should be called an intervention and not the fulfilment of an allied agreement." Would Messrs. Woolf and Bagguley have described it invidiously as "intervention" had there been democratic help to the government of Spain at its request in 1937? And, if they dismissed the word *involvement* as "inexplicit" and *presence* as "ingenuous and unhistorical," why in the world did they not simply write "the *action* of the United States in Viet Nam"? This would plainly have been the neutral way of stating the issue.

The editing is also defective in the arrangement of the replies. The editors report that of an unspecified number of answers received, "259 are given in this book." They do not explain what mysterious test the unpublished answers failed to pass. As for those published, these are set forth in half a dozen chapters according to criteria so ambiguous and baffling that it is often impossible to see why a particular response should fall in chapter 6, say, rather than in chapter 1. The simpler arrangement of the 1937 book—"for," "against" and "neutral" (modified perhaps in this case to "for escalation," "for de-escalation and negotiation," "for immediate American withdrawal" and "agnostic")—would have made this volume far more intelligible and usable.

NONE THE LESS, *Authors Take Sides on Vietnam* offers fascinating testimony about intellectual and literary attitudes towards Viet Nam. Peter Simple will no doubt rejoice in splendid specimens of silliness:

> ... against all war in general, since it settles nothing (*Alain Robbe-Grillet*)
> ... against all wars, no matter how, where or why they are fought. (*Pamela Frankau*)

[1] *Authors Take Sides on Vietnam.* Edited by Cecil Woolf and John Bagguley. Peter Owen, 37s. 6d.

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Do M. Robbe-Grillet and Miss Frankau, one wonders, *really* think Europe should have surrendered to Hitler? Then, for vulgarity (and for hopeless rendition of my national idiom),

> Goddammit, every US bomb dropped on Hanoi canstitoots a triumph of the American Way of Life. For chrissakes, whaddya want us to drop? Billy Graham? (*George Barker*)

And for irrelevance,

> How can one trust the defenders of Saigon's liberty when they are unable to give the American nation a clear answer to the question... Who killed Kennedy? (*Eugen Barbu*)

Graham Greene announces here that if he had to choose "between rule by General Motors or rule by the communist states I prefer to belong to an unaligned country"; he has subsequently sharpened this dictum, I note, to indicate a clear preference for Russia over the United States (letter to *The Times*, 4 September 1967). Lord Snow ingeniously succeeds in quoting himself twice in the first three sentences of his reply. Gore Vidal promises that, for himself, if the war continues after the 1968 election, "a change in nationality will be the only moral response"; one trusts that he won't forget. Barbara Tuchman writes that a Viet Nam settlement may not be possible, so far as her country is concerned, "without a change of Administration—or at least of the Chief Executive." Since changing the Chief Executive without changing the administration is not easy to do, one must hope that Mrs. Tuchman has only impeachment in mind.

A MARKED DIFFERENCE between 1967 and 1937, as the editors note, is the much wider doubt writers have today about the transcendent value of their opinions on public affairs. T. S. Eliot then was almost alone in suggesting it best "that at least a few men of letters should remain isolated; and take no part in these collective activities." The experience of the last generation has been, for some writers at least, chastening. History has turned out not to be so easy and predictable as supposed. "Who could have foreseen," asks Robert Graves, "that Franco's victory in the Civil War, deplored by most English and French writers, would result in his denying Hitler control of the Mediterranean and thus assuring an Allied victory?"—an exaggerated point, but still a point. Raymond Mortimer writes, "Comment inspired by emotion without knowledge can have little value"; and Manfred Hausmann observes that the statements by artists about Viet Nam he has read are "without exception marked by an astonishing ignorance of the *subject*.... Such judgments are of no interest. Moreover, they intensify the general confusion." Auden sums up this position:

> Why writers should be canvassed for their opinion on controversial political issues, I cannot imagine. Their views have no more authority than those of any reasonably well-educated citizen. Indeed, when read in bulk, the statements made by writers, including the greatest, would seem to indicate that literary talent and political common sense are rarely found together.

Diffidence is a good deal better than arrogance; still it can be pushed too far. If writers are no wiser than greengrocers or colonels, they are, on the whole, no more stupid. One is glad to see that Mr. Auden, after his preliminary disclaimer, goes on to make brief but quite sensible remarks about Viet Nam.

A number thus hesitate, but far from a majority. Most of the contributors admit no particular doubts about their competence or discomfort about their views. Matej Bor modestly notes, "The writer is the conscience of the world," and several others obviously share this sense of a chosen people bearing exceptional and heavy responsibilities. Unchastened by past error, some hand down verdicts with enviable definiteness.

> The patient and just men of Hanoi... are the wisest, most responsible and most independent government in existence in the world today. (*Italo Calvino*)
>
> I have no doubt that left to themselves the Vietnamese will choose revolution. (*Isaac Deutscher*)

Two Oxford dons disagree in everything except the dogmatism of their opinion:

> The vast mass of Vietnamese *long* for the Americans to win. (*Roy Harrod*)
>
> There seems no doubt that most of the inhabitants of Vietnam would rather be red than dead. (*Christopher Hill*)

How can either of these eminent scholars be so sure?[2]

THIS CERTITUDE regarding matters about which no rational person can be wholly certain characterises supporters of the American action in Viet Nam as well as critics. Among supporters, Mr. Roy Harrod forthrightly pronounces this

[2] This may be as good a place as any to deal with another contradiction of interest only to myself. Richard Rovere quotes me as describing the Viet Nam war as a "tragedy without villains"; R. S. Arora, citing the *New York Herald Tribune*, quotes me as calling it "Johnson's personal war." Mr. Rovere is right; the *Herald Tribune* is wrong.

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"the most worthwhile war that has been fought in this century, apart from that against Hitler." More worthwhile than the Korean War? the Arab-Israeli wars? the Spanish Civil War? the First World War? the Mexican Revolution? Kingsley Amis boldly flourishes a syllogism:

> Those who favour American withdrawal from Vietnam must either admire communism, or suppose that it is not imperialistic and aggressive, or both. I can do neither. So I support America's present policy.

What a collection of *non sequiturs*! I do not admire communism nor do I suppose it to be non-aggressive. But this hardly leads to the irresistible conclusion that America's "present policy" is right. Eric Linklater, Constantine Fitz-Gibbon, John Sparrow, James Michener, Saumyendranath Tagore, Geoffrey Fairbairn and John Braine offer more considered and reflective defences of the American course. Nor should one omit Marianne Moore:

> It is short-sightedly irresponsible, I think, to permit communist domination and acquiesce in the crushing of the weak by the strong.

But these are very much minority voices. Most contributors are passionately against the American action.

> ... the most barbarous act of warfare since the Second World War. (*Isaac Deutscher*)
> ... one of the more wantonly wicked political actions of the human race. (*Iris Murdoch*)
> Their behaviour is on a par with that of the Germans in World War II. (*Irene Rathbone*)

A West German (Martin Walser) has the characteristic effrontery to call the American action "no less criminal than Hitler's assault on European countries." Americans, with better grace, join in the condemnation:

> We are reducing ourselves to the low moral level of Nazis. (*Joseph Heller*)
> America has become a criminal, sinister country. ... America's war on Vietnam makes me, for the first time in my life, ashamed of being an American. (*Susan Sontag*)
> The war in Vietnam has now become in many respects the most immoral ever waged by one people on another. (*Robert Crichton*)
> The crimes already committed ... equal the worst atrocities committed by Hitler, Stalin, and Mao. (*Lewis Mumford*)

A number of writers demand a new Nuremberg. William Empson wants to punish American airmen who drop napalm; Hugh MacDiarmid would move up the ranks and try "the leading American instigators, and chief military and naval officers." We already know how Lord

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Russell feels on this question. Sentimentalists will welcome evidence of a restoration of ties—on this point at least—between Simone de Beauvoir:

> Johnson is in my opinion a war criminal quite as guilty as those who were condemned at Nuremberg.

and Nelson Algren:

> Yes, I am in full support of bringing Lyndon Johnson to public trial for crimes against humanity.

(Algren adds, "I would not accord such dignity to Hubert Humphrey: I feel that simply putting a pillowcase over his cage would be sufficient punishment.")

IT IS NOTABLE, however (this difference between 1967 and 1937 is not recorded by the editors) that condemnation of one side in Viet Nam is ordinarily not, as in the case of Spain, accompanied by belief in the other. In the main, only communists and fellow-travellers succeed in working up much enthusiasm for the Viet Cong. There are, for some reason, a number of these. The Iron Curtain representatives, of course, fall obediently into line: did Messrs. Woolf and Bagguley expect anything else? And somewhere the editors have exhumed such improbable and, one had assumed, obsolete figures as R. Palme Dutt and D. N. Pritt. Can Dutt and Pritt still be cranking words out after all these years, like dreary machines which someone once turned on and then left in the attic? Or were they perhaps inventions of some practical joker like Claud Cockburn? At any rate, they have plainly learned nothing—certainly not how to write—in the last thirty years. Mr. Pritt's effusion is, typically, the longest and most boring in the book. (The second longest, by Dr. Joseph Needham, is predictable politically but contains a brilliant brief essay on the history of China.)

It is possible, of course, that some who confine themselves to the advocacy of immediate American withdrawal secretly expect or hope that this would bring about a total Viet Cong victory. Graham Greene writes that, if elements in the south want to continue the war, "let them do it without Western aid. Such a war would soon come to an end." This last sentence has the sound of someone smacking his lips. But the more reasoned and interesting advocates of immediate American withdrawal—Lewis Mumford, Naomi Mitchison, Anita Desai, Alan Moorehead, Allen Ginsberg—do not write about the Viet Cong the way people thirty years ago wrote, and felt, about the Spanish Republicans.

Since my own position is that we should slow down the war and strive earnestly for a negotiated settlement, it will not be surprising if I should find most wisdom in those who argue against both escalation and immediate withdrawal. (Is it necessary to point out that negotiation and immediate withdrawal are incompatible policies? Hanoi and the Viet Cong will obviously not negotiate if they think they are going to win, which means that a military stalemate—*i.e.*, a continued American presence, if I may use that forbidden word—is a precondition to negotiation.) Sir Isaiah Berlin provides a scrupulous and sensitive account of the impossibility of coming up "with an unconditional yes or no." J. B. Priestley, James Jones, Peter de Vries, Richard Rovere, John Updike, Stuart Hampshire, Stephen Spender, David Garnett, Brigid Brophy, Elspeth Huxley, Vernon Bartlett, Stanley Kauffmann, James Wellard—all, while more or less critical of the present American course, write with a reasonable sense of the difficulty and complexity of the problem.

As for the future, a good many contributors simply throw up their hands on the second question—how the conflict is to be resolved—or retire into pieties about leaving "the people of Vietnam free to work out whatever form of government they wish" (Lord Boyd Orr). A formulation like this is sheer escapism; as John Updike properly comments, "It is absurd to suggest that a village in the grip of guerrillas has freely chosen." The world leader most often recommended as the one to whom the problem can be safely confided is General de Gaulle. He has the endorsement in various contexts of S. N. Behrman, Rex Warner, Mongo Beti, Arnold Wesker and Allen Ginsberg. Nancy Mitford would leave the solution to "the only two living statesmen, U Thant and General de Gaulle." Senator Fulbright and Walter Lippmann also come in for favourable mention.

Authors Take Sides on Vietnam makes it clear that the literary community, as here represented, embraces as wide a variety of information and emotion, reason and dogmatism, as any other group in the population. Yet, within the diversity, the book displays one clear and ominous current of opinion—a rising current of anti-Americanism, in the end almost genocidal in its implications.

BY ANTI-AMERICANISM, I do not mean anti-Johnsonism; plenty of Americans have succumbed to that. I mean the proposition that *all* Americans are terrible, that American society is irremediably corrupt, that America has become a raging menace and that the rest of the world should organise to put America down. The Red Guards in this view are nothing compared to

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W. W. Rostow. Marghanita Laski is relatively benign when she denounces American intervention "anywhere."

> Their levels—in culture, in sensitivity, in intelligence—are broadly speaking too low for the responsibilities they assume.

Sorry, dear, about Western Europe, 1942–45. Miss Laski evidently feels about Americans the way some Americans feel about Texans.

This is only the beginning. Go on to Andrew Salkey, with his talk of the "vile megalomaniacal commitment to murder and 'American' democracy" and his theory that "mass-murder [has] come to mean the American way of looking at and dealing with the problems of its international life." And to Sir Herbert Read, who sees America as Nazi Germany *redivivus*: "We must not," he says, in the very accents of Secretary Rusk talking about China, "repeat the mistakes of the years 1936–39." His programme is drastic:

> The United States must be ostracised in every international organisation. Support for all its external policies must be withheld. . . . With every force at our disposal, personal and national, we must oppose the rulers of the United States until they admit their false reasoning and obsessional fears, and withdraw unconditionally from the inferno of hatred and destruction which they have wilfully created.

This is still mild compared to David Holbrook, who portrays America as

> pouring out hate and evil into the world—even to the extent of being prepared to sacrifice the world's very survival. . . . They will buy out nations where they can, corrupt where they can, burn and torture where they can, and poison or deliberately spread disease where they can. They are utterly not to be trusted, and are unlikely to be restrained from destroying the world unless a majority of large nations can, by material and forceful sanctions, force them to behave internationally. . . . What a relief it would be to grapple with such a consequent crisis! What a clean feeling one would have!

One need not take too seriously, I hope, the call for a world pogrom against Americans. Yet this hysteria—can one regard the statements of Salkey, Read, and Holbrook as anything else? —is symptomatic of a spreading mood which should disturb those in Washington intent on further widening the war. For, if *Authors Take Sides on Vietnam* suggests anything, it is that a good many authors through the world, forced to take sides, are very likely to side against the United States. Like Geoffrey Grigson, they somehow doubt "the collective presentations of the American government, which is tipsy with white words to describe its own exclusive virtues, and red words to describe the exclusive evil of other societies." Mario Luzi puts the matter judiciously when he warns of the perils of a foreign policy founded

> on inadequate understanding of the reasons and of the forces of the modern world. It ruins the image of American democracy elaborated by the great Presidents—the last of whom was Kennedy —and it ends by obscuring a light which used to shine in all men who were free or who aspired to become free.

SHOULD WRITERS express opinions on issues of public policy?

> *I think it better that in times like these*
> *A poet's mouth be silent, for in truth*
> *We have no gift to set a statesman right.*

Thus Yeats: but he did not follow his own advice, the worse for his subsequent reputation. Yet I have known poets who have made more sense on public issues than statesmen I have also known. The fact is that the value of an opinion is independent of its origin: poets can be intelligent as well as irrational on public matters, statesmen stupid as well as informed. This is why writers should not hesitate to express their views if they feel they have something to say. Opinion in any society must be formed some way; ignorance and hysteria are not the monopoly of literary men; and there is no reason for writers to hang back when basic decisions are to be made. Little is sillier than the argument that people known for one thing should be debarred from having views on anything else: the effect of this rule would be to confine politics to the politicians and the anonymous mass. And, if one adopts the broader position that public questions have become too arcane for lay comment, then one resigns one's life, and death, to generals, scientists, economists, public relations men, special assistants and other *ci-devant* technicians. Can anyone assert that the record justifies great confidence in their decisions? The detail of issues may often be technical, but the final choices rarely are.

Still, writers can claim no special authority, privilege or immunity: they enter the battlefield of public affairs at their own risk. If they are prudent they will summon to their political judgments the same qualities they exercise in their literary work: a recognition of the complexity of human motives and of the intractability of many external situations; a mistrust of absolute judgment; a revulsion from sob-sisterism; a contempt for hysteria; a readiness to distinguish between moral anguish and political process. If the contributors to this volume have sometimes not lived up to their own best standards, it only reminds us that writers are as mixed a lot as Secretaries of State.

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The Steinerian Agony

By Anthony Burgess

I APPROACH George Steiner's major collection of essays[1] *in*, to borrow from Kafka, *grosser Verlegenheit*. My respect for Dr. Steiner as scholar, critic and novelist is as considerable as my admiration of him as a human being. I wonder how far, ill-equipped in scholarship as I am, I have the right to find him frequently wrong-headed. And there is the more general embarrassment of, in the context of Dr. Steiner's main thesis of the need for more silence and fewer words, my adding, however minimally, to the least defensible body of noise of the lot—the noise of the reviewer who reviews reviews. For Dr. Steiner's essays are, many of them, in the tradition of what T. S. Eliot wrote in *The Criterion* and then persuaded the whole world to regard, when cunningly grouped in a volume, as contributions to scholarship: I mean the submission of tentative ideas, however novel, unbacked by little except the personal hunch, the small arrogance of conviction. Anything that stimulates the duller, more plodding mind to the erection of large critical structures is to be cherished, but we must not pretend that a collection of reviews, even when given unity by a common theme and dignity by hard covers, is much more than a bundle of salutary irritants or, more digestible, trayload of cocktails flanked by pretzels. Dr. Steiner starts things, but he does not finish them; nor do we expect more from reviews. I am most particularly *in grosser Verlegenheit* when faced with reviewing Dr. Steiner reviewing Dr. Leavis, who shares with Lévi-Strauss and Marshall McLuhan the section in this volume entitled *Masters*. I am put in the position which Dr. Steiner regards, rightly, as the most ridiculous with which any writer can be confronted: having to write about a man who writes about a man who writes about men who write.

Still, Dr. Steiner has a separable message which ought not to be met by the silence which appears to be acquiesence. This message relates to the ultimate failure of language to provide an apparatus of adequate expression for the horrors of the contemporary world. Dr. Steiner is a Jew, and it is as a Jew, not as a detached aesthete or philologist, that he reproaches language with its inability to cope with the referents that modern history submits to it. All that is left, after Auschwitz and Buchenwald, is silence. Monsieur Beckett, as he calls him, is on the right track here. Dr. Steiner envisages a stage on which characters grope for expression foredoomed to inadequacy; at length a word is squeezed out; then the curtain descends. Beckett has, of course, recently given us a *dramaticule* on those lines. There is a better man in Cocteau's *Orphée*, who exhibits a titled book with totally blank pages. And, some years ago, in the public bars of England, a similar book went the rounds of the customers. Its title was *What the Labour Government Has Done for the Working Man*. It would be irrelevant here to call for a new edition.

Dr. Steiner has, of course, a special right to be horrified by what the Nazis, and the other, lesser, anti-Semitic states have done to a whole race. There is the guilt of his own escape, there is the subtler guilt of having brought children into the world. He exhibits some of his horror and incredulity very movingly, and adds to German guilt the guilt of the Allies, who inexplicably failed even to attempt to destroy the gas-ovens or the railway lines which brought doomed freights of Jews to die in them. Particular horrors are ghastly enough—like the rabbis forced to clean out latrines with their mouths—but the true ghastliness seems to be quantitative. Now the tradition in which I was brought up has always discounted the quantitative argument. To make one Jew, or Catholic, or Lutheran, or free-thinking intellectual, drown, flayed, in a bath of human ordure is as much a token of the existence of evil as the world needs. To repeat this act a million times adds to the sensationalism of the evil but not to

[1] *Language and Silence*. By GEORGE STEINER. Faber & Faber, 50s.

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its quantum, since evil, by its very nature, cannot be quantified. To wish to destroy a race or sect is strictly no more evil than to wish to destroy a single man or woman. The amount of evil in the world has not increased since the days of the Inquisition: this is self-evident. It would seem to follow that language is as adequate today for the symbolisation of evil, or the expression of abhorrence at it, as it was when Shakespeare saw kites gnaw at heads on Temple Bar or hangmen pluck out still-beating hearts at Tyburn.

But Dr. Steiner is right when he refuses to accept literature, which is the aesthetic exploitation of the word to the end of presenting a *Vorstellung* of a presumed ultimate reality which is wholly "good," as a mode of activity or communication to which the fact of evil is irrelevant. I personally have always found it difficult to think in terms of the "Humane Literacy" which provides the title of Dr. Steiner's first, and basic, essay, but the civilisation of the Protestant West has taken as axiomatic literature's power "to broaden and refine the resources of the human spirit." As Dr. Steiner indicates, the seed-beds of the highest literary culture have frequently been the forcing-grounds of hate, intolerance and persecution.

> Barbarism prevailed on the very ground of Christian humanism, of Renaissance culture and classic rationalism. We know that some of the men who devised and administered Auschwitz had been trained to read Shakespeare or Goethe, and continued to do so.

This again is nothing new, but only an age able to subscribe to the heresy of literature as a moral teacher is likely to be shocked by it. It is cognate with another heresy, that liberal one propagated by H. G. Wells, which taught the attainment of human perfection through scientific education. Evil, said the liberals, was only another name for ignorance. The Germans, the least ignorant people in the world, exploded that fallacy with typical thoroughness.

And yet it is the reformed liberals who are most Augustinian in the presentation of evil as ontological reality, though, being reformed liberals, they do not backdate this reality. In *What is Literature?*,[2] Sartre said:

> We have been taught to take Evil seriously. It is neither our fault nor our merit if we lived in a time when torture was a daily fact. Chateaubriand, Oradour, the Rue des Saussaies, Dachau and Auschwitz have all demonstrated to us that Evil is not an appearance, that knowing its cause does not dispel it, that it is not opposed to Good as a confused idea is to a clear one. . . . In spite of ourselves, we come to this conclusion, which will seem shocking to lofty souls: Evil cannot be redeemed.

Evil was not the children blowing up a frog or tearing the wings off a fly at Le Havre or Laon, when Sartre was a schoolmaster there: evil had to wait for Dachau and Auschwitz. In other words, evil, like gin, is not a spiritual fact in the drop, the hardly tastable globule: you need a good swig before you can start believing in it. Dr. Steiner seems to accept, with Sartre, that new responsibilities were presented to literature in 1945; the truth is that, if those responsibilities are viable, then they were always so. But I do not believe that literature has ever been anything but a limited exploration of such sensibility as its practitioners are gifted or poisoned with. Aware of Dachau, we can rage at the charming Pelagianism of *Under Milk Wood*, but we shall be wrong to rage. And we shall probably be wrong to make our aesthetic evaluations in terms of the artist's width of moral sensibility. For literature is, in fact, art, and it would be pure form if it could.

Viewed in Thomistic terms, literature becomes something that merely pleases. Dr. Steiner is wrong when he says:

> There is some evidence that a trained, persistent commitment to the life of the printed word, a capacity to identify deeply and critically with imaginary personages or sentiments, diminishes the immediacy, the hard edge of actual circumstance. We come to respond more acutely to the literary sorrow than to the misery next door.

The truth is that the responses are qualitatively different. "Men who wept at Werther or Chopin moved, unrealising, through literal hell." The tears of aesthetic rapture belong to different ducts from the ones stimulated by real-life agony. The man who is indifferent to the pain of others is not made more of a monster by his ability to weep at the slow movement of Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony. Art has little to do with life, which merely provides raw material for sonatas and sonnets. To enjoy *Macbeth* is pretty close to enjoying an apple, and we continue to enjoy apples even though Nazi torturers enjoyed them too. The fallacy that literature is essentially different from the other arts derives from the fact that it uses language, not pure

[2] Jean-Paul Sartre, *What is Literature?* (new ed., 1967). Methuen, 25s.

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sound, shape, or colour, and it shares this medium with modes of social action that can be viewed morally. But language is given meaning only by contexts, and the contexts of art are not those of the living-room or the death-chamber.

OF ONE LANGUAGE Dr. Steiner has a good deal to say. What he says is dangerously seductive, and I think it ought to be resisted:

> . . . let us keep one fact clearly in mind: the German language was not innocent of the horrors of Nazism. It is not merely that a Hitler, a Goebbels, and a Himmler happened to speak German. Nazism found in the language precisely what it needed to give voice to its savagery. Hitler heard inside his native tongue the latent hysteria, the confusion, the quality of hypnotic trance. He plunged unerringly into the undergrowth of language, into those zones of darkness and outcry which are the infancy of articulate speech, and which come before words have grown mellow and provisional to the touch of the mind. He sensed in German another music than that of Goethe, Heine, and Mann; a rasping cadence, half nebulous jargon, half obscenity. . . . A language in which one can write a "*Horst Wessel Lied*" is ready to give hell a native tongue. (How should the word "*spritzen*" recover a sane meaning after having signified to millions the "spurting" of Jewish blood from knife points?)

This is all very intemperate and unscholarly. I refuse to accept that German ever had the unique and horrid privilege of preordination as the language of evil. To be fanciful, as Dr. Steiner is, one might regret that German always refused to drink of the humanising Mediterranean, but the same may be said of the Scandinavian languages, whose associations are with candour, cleanliness, and winter sports. The romantic pursuit by Jacob Grimm of the Aryan sources of German is commonly regarded as noble rather than sinister: if there was primordial savagery to be unearthed, it was not far from the cadences of the *Rig Veda*. The German language, like every other language, has always been morally neutral, with no greater propensity for corruption than its neighbour languages of the pogroms. Its apparent brutalising under Hitler was no more than the dragging of it into new contexts of obscene belief and filthy action. Like the pigeons that roost in blessed indifference on the Berlin Wall, its words are beyond good and evil.

CONTEXT is all, and perhaps it is only the foreigner, with a rare and superficial contact with German, who is likely to delimit its words to small personal areas of significance.

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Reading a German shirt advertisement, which undertakes to replace any garment found unsatisfactory, I took in with a shock the term *Ersatz*. The guns-not-butter connotation swiftly faded, however, and the word settled into its primary and neutral denotation of "replacement." On the Kurfürstendamm, a week or so ago, I saw a motor-van advertising "*Striptease für Jedermann*." I had recently been thinking of the German morality play, and the *Jedermann* suddenly struck, in that context, with a factitious smack of blasphemy. Then it slid out of the zone of narrow and specialist denotation and merely came to mean "everyone." The same thing has, surely, happened with *spritzen*. When a girl fondly introduces her big brother, the Orwellian associations are automatically excluded. Language is like that. There are several Berlin telephone subscribers with the name Streicher (though, admittedly, there is no Hitler), and one expects them to be decent family men who would never harm a fly.

Unhappy about the fancied culpabilities of language, Dr. Steiner nevertheless does not call for its liquidation and the immediate supervention of heavenly silence. Like virginity, silence must be opted for in full awareness of the richness of experience (however dangerous) which it replaces. He is appreciative of the achievement of Günter Grass, who has thrown whole dictionaries at a West Germany whose linguistic life must, so we are invited to suppose, have been first diseased and then etiolated. Among modern British novels, he finds especial virtue in Lawrence Durrell's *Alexandria Quartet*, whose rather old-fashioned orotundities belong to the same rhetorical school as Dr. Steiner's own expository style. I think he's misled by a wayward ear although he is acute enough to descry a certain emptiness under the coruscations. On Shakespeare's language (in an occasional essay written for the quatercentenary) he speaks admirable and moving sense. It is a virtue in Shakespeare to seem to use English radically—that is, with a full awareness of etymology and paronomastic tensions. One might purge what Dr. Steiner says of Hitler of all its pejorative content, affirming of Shakespeare that "he plunged unerringly into the undergrowth of language, into those zones of darkness and outcry which are the infancy of articulate speech, etc., etc." Again, a matter of context.

THE GREAT AUTHOR fills the world with sound but, like the great musician, he knows the virtue of silence. Kafka, whom Dr. Steiner reveres, asked for the suppression of all his works after his death. Rimbaud and Hölderlin went suddenly silent. Sylvia Plath died young, and this was a kind of opting for silence. Modern composers use patches of silence as plastically as they use sound. But music itself, Dr. Steiner seems to imply, is a species of silence: it is the art that begins when words leave off. How much of a musician Dr. Steiner is, I do not know: he seems to have a thorough acquaintance with the score of *Moses und Aron*, on the significance of which—in the context of his main theme—he writes very eloquently. But I don't think his thesis would greatly commend itself to a practical composer. Anyone who has ever written music knows all too well the charlatanism which is inherent in sheer sound. Sit down at the piano and improvise a sequence of slow secondary ninths, and your unwise auditors will murmur "How lovely." But such loveliness is a step down from the loveliness of a tender steak. It is ear-tickling only; it totally lacks nutritional value. And, on the higher level of formal organisation, there are plenty of elemental siren-voices in silver oboes and silken violins. The silence Dr. Steiner is perhaps feeling towards is the silence of the orchestral score: there's the true music, eternal, above accidents, self-electedly virginal, safe. And yet, of course, emasculated. But the sound of music, with its key to the zones of darkness and halls of pre-articulate speech, is—if we accept the Steinerian philosophy—far more dangerous than any concentration of words. Hitler rode to power on waves of upper partials. Who could resist Nazi choirs and military bands? One swooned in a Valhalla of harmonics.

AND YET one can love *Die Meistersinger* even though it was Hitler's favourite opera. Art is outside human history: it is a god or an animal, but it is not made in man's own image. It has no value as an interpreter of human motives or inhuman actions; fingered by gross men, its virtue remains intact. In bringing together art and the agonies of our time, Dr. Steiner has done a daring thing whose implications he has not, because of the limitations of his own literary forms, pursued to the limit. The limit would inevitably be the explosion of his thesis. As it is, all his eloquence cannot convince us. The final image is of a scholarly man, with taste and capacity for suffering equally pitched to a hardly tolerable exquisiteness, puzzled and angry at the oldest mystery in the world—man as a split personality, able to maintain his precarious balance only because of the equal tug of incompatibles.

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Teilhard & Tillich

CHRISTIANS have for generations been of two distinct kinds, or, as it would perhaps be truer to say, of two distinct temperaments: the Catholic or the Protestant, the Jesuit or the Jansenist, the High Church or the Puritan. The difference has often led to conflict, war, and even to a mutual hatred stronger than the love which Christians are commanded to bear towards all men. The two kinds of Christianity correspond to what David Hume once called the two "corruptions" of true religion, Superstition and Enthusiasm. "Superstition" was Hume's word for the characteristic weakness of the Catholic, Jesuit, and High Church types of Christian, who were (as Hume believed) prompted by their melancholy dispositions to regard the Deity with such morbid awe as to approach Him only through intermediaries, and hence to elevate priestcraft, ceremonials and dogma. "Enthusiasm" was Hume's name for the defect of the Protestant, Jansenist, Puritan types of Christian, among whom inner raptures of religious feeling swept away all respect for reason, authority, and outward observances.

It would be uncharitable to suggest in these days of ecumenical fraternity, when Christians are no longer so deeply divided, that they might still be separated into Hume's two categories. Yet something of that division of temperament remains, as anyone must sense who reads, in quick succession, books by or about the two most eminent Christian thinkers of recent years, Père Teilhard de Chardin and Professor Paul Tillich. Hume might well have seen on Teilhard the mark of "Superstition" and on Tillich that of "Enthusiasm."

Both, it should be said at once, are exceedingly attractive men. Their scholarship is irreproachable. Teilhard was, of course, a famous geologist as well as a Jesuit missionary. Tillich was a professor of philosophy at several universities. In both cases, there is abundant evidence of moral excellence. Teilhard, who joined the Society of Jesus at an unusually early age, undertook all the humble and gruelling duties of a missionary with unfailing grace: his patience and kindness even to the most boring and importunate people were plainly Christ-like. Tillich's virtues were no less conspicuous. He was one of the very first (and, alas, very few) German Protestant Christian leaders to oppose Nazism; he was dismissed from his chair at Frankfurt University in 1933 and became, as an exile in America, a model and exemplar, in an ugly age, of a life inspired by thoughts of goodness.

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But what is one really to make of Teilhard's books, or Tillich's? Often in reading them, one feels like Alice wandering through the Looking Glass. It is not that one often runs against anything which seems untrue, but rather that one is repeatedly struck by words and sentences to which it is hard to assign any meaning whatever. Take, for example, what Teilhard says about science. He did such distinguished work in geology that anything he says on this subject must be listened to. What is science? "Working on the Real." What is the Real? Christ. How do we know Christ? In mysticism. Hence, "mysticism is the science of sciences." But how does one practise this science? In the vocation of a Christian. How does one become a Christian? By submission to the Church in all "the cold rigour of its Catholic demands."

One reason why this line of argument is so unnerving is that the word "science" is being used in two different senses. "Science" in the accepted modern sense in which geology is a science belongs to a different logical category from "science" in the rather peculiar sense in which Teilhard chooses to call mysticism a science. To confuse them is to breed bewilderment. And indeed Teilhard himself recognised the distinction when he arranged his published work. As Père Henri de Lubac points out in his very useful guide to Teilhard's thought,[1] the books fall into two classes: the "scientific-philosophical," of which *The Phenomenon of Man* (1955) is the best-known work, and the "religious-mystical," to which *Le Milieu Divin* (1957) belongs.

The distinction is important because Teilhard is really a man with two doctrines. The first, or "scientific," doctrine is not unlike the theories of Sir Julian Huxley and Professor C. H. Waddington, according to which evolution is ethical. The best summary of this doctrine I know of was written by one of Teilhard's fellow Jesuits, Père Joseph Maréchal of Louvain:

> ...to the origins of natural evolution, Père Teilhard attributes latent potentialities, sorts of *rationes seminales*, which already partake of the nature of "thought" or of "freedom," but it is thought in embryo, and freedom that is still under constraint....
>
> In spite of its interiority and spontaneity, consciousness in man is still linked, by a natural connexion, with organised matter: our consciousness is not the consciousness of pure spirits. Since man is in continuity with the rest of matter (even though not in complete dependence on it) he thus holds, by right, a place in the chronological series and theoretical concatenations of natural history: there is a "phenomenon of Man," and we cannot conceive a total discontinuity between phenomena. What Père Teilhard sought to do was to construct an empirical theory of man, considered in his continuity with the rest of nature but without claiming to explain the "whole" of man by that continuity; conversely, to interpret nature itself, in its ascending movement towards man, by analogies suggested by the immediate and wholly interior perception of our conscious life; to bring out in all its fullness the correlation in man of the interior world of consciousness and the exterior world of matter—that is primarily what he sought to do.

God is hardly as much as named in *The Phenomenon of Man*, and the sort of supreme being which is to some extent entailed by the argument could easily be that of an 18th-century *philosophe*. It is in his second doctrine that Teilhard comes out as a champion of Catholicism. In *Le Milieu Divin* and similar writings he explains that knowledge of God is to be obtained by direct awareness. Here we meet such remarks as "One does not draw near to the Absolute by travelling, but by ecstasy." Or again, something written a few days before Teilhard started work on *Le Milieu Divin*:

> I pray to God that he may preserve in me this deep-rooted zest, this sort of lucid intoxication, that makes me drunk with the joy of Being, quaffed from some perennial spring.... What science and what philosophy could compare with the knowledge of that Reality—and above all, with its perception, however modest and embryonic it may be?

It is evidently a principle of this second doctrine of Teilhard's that the necessary zest and lucid intoxication is achieved only through adherence and obedience to the discipline of the Catholic Church. The great weakness of Teilhard is his failure to provide any real bridge or link between his two doctrines. And because they are in no way dependent on each other, they scarcely add up to what could properly be called a "body of thought."

TILLICH'S PREDICAMENT is of another kind. For Tillich belongs to the Protestant tradition of Christianity with its tendency, if Hume is right, towards "Enthusiasm" rather than "Superstition." And whereas Teilhard is eager to humble his mind by assenting to anything the Church demands, Tillich is out to strip the articles of the Christian faith to such a bare minimum that no intellectual barrier need stand between any man and salvation. Tillich does not even ask for an avowed belief in God. What he does suggest is that people believe in God without knowing it, or, at any rate, believe in the Being that Tillich calls "the God above God."

[1] *The Religion of Teilhard de Chardin*. By HENRI DE LUBAC, S. J. Collins, 42s.

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Tillich is an existentialist of the German school, having much in common with Martin Heidegger, whose atheism Tillich (rightly in my opinion) questions: to go on and on denying the existence of God, in the way Heidegger does, is really a paradoxical way of conferring reality on God. And from Tillich's point of view, to be interested in whether God exists or not, even to be able to assign meaning to the word "God" is to be already on the side of religion, and virtually a member of what Tillich calls "the latent church."

Since the important task of the theological existentialist is not to provide rational or empirical arguments for God's existence, but rather to justify faith on the basis of inward experience, Tillich sets out to examine certain feelings which are common to most men, and to give an explanation of those feelings. He describes religious experience in terms of sensations like anxiety, guilt, and loneliness being conquered by the use of will or courage. His best-known book is entitled *The Courage to Be.* There he writes:

> Man's being, ontic as well as spiritual, is not only given him but also demanded of him. He is responsible for it; literally, he is required to answer if he is asked, what he has made of himself. He who asks him is his judge, namely he himself, who, at the same time, stands against him. . . . Man is essentially "finite freedom," freedom not in the sense of indeterminacy but in the sense of being able to determine himself through decisions in the centre of his being. Man, as finite freedom, is free within the contingencies of his finitude. But within these limits he is asked to make of himself what he is supposed to become to fulfil his destiny.

Of course, a philosophy of will is nothing new in German thought, and Tillich was always conscious of the debts he owed to the traditions and culture of his native land. Even after thirty years in America, and after learning to write in English, his work remained typically and thoroughly German.

On the Boundary[2] is an autobiographical sketch which gives an interesting account of what Tillich took to be the formative influences on his intellectual development. He felt he inherited from his Prussian father a meditative disposition, a heightened consciousness of duty and personal sin, and a strong regard for authority and feudal traditions; from his Rhenish mother a zest for life, love of the concrete, mobility, rationality and democracy. However, his mother died when he was very young, and it was his father, a Lutheran clergyman, who brought him up.

[2] *On the Boundary.* By Paul Tillich. Collins, 18s.

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Tillich recalls that his contacts at the Prussian *Volksschule* where he began his education endeared him to the simple people while aristocratic friends of his father attracted him to the upper class; for his own class, the *bourgeoisie*, he conceived an early and lasting contempt. This helped to make him a socialist; and socialism (which he says is difficult to combine with Lutheranism) undermined his religious orthodoxy.

Nevertheless he became a minister of religion. And indeed he confesses that the Prussian in him remained strong; it made him submit to the Social Democratic Party, which he disliked, and in general "to subordinate myself to military and civil authorities in peace and war." The Prussian in him also, he suggests, prompted him to try to elaborate such vast theoretical systems as his *Entwurf eines Systems der Wissenschaften*. However, his conversion to existentialism as a result of reading Schelling, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche evidently brought out the Rhinelander in Tillich; and his association, through the labour movement, with the German working classes after 1918 made him feel there was a need, not only for socialism, but for some kind of new articulation of Christianity for the so-called Godless masses.

In truth, the "Godless masses" did not appear to Tillich to be "Godless" at all. And so he began to work out his theory according to which people who do not know they believe in God still bear witness to the "God above God," and those who do not belong to any known church can still belong to the "latent church." In all this there is plenty of evidence of beautiful feelings, but not, one is bound to say, of much intellectual rigour.

MAURICE FRIEDMAN'S book *To Deny Our Nothingness*[3] provides a summary of Tillich's views, but says nothing about Teilhard, although the book is supposed to be "a survey and critique of modern thought." Nor, for that matter, is there anything about Lévi-Strauss, Wittgenstein, Ortega, Lukács, Russell, Croce, or dozens of others one might have expected to find in such a survey. Mr. Friedman's oracles are mostly novelists, such as Aldous Huxley, Graham Greene, Herman Hesse and Kazantzakis; psychologists like Freud, Jung, and Erich Fromm; or religious writers like Simone Weil, Buber, and Berdyaev. To be frank the book is the most appalling *Kitsch*. The various characters are paraded before us, not in the guise of thinkers or artists, but as *idéologues*, to be noted only for their message. The message is extracted in the most perfunctory manner. Huxley is treated as the author of *The Devils of Loudun* only, Koestler as if he had written nothing but *Darkness at Noon*, and Sartre as if he had stopped thinking when he stopped writing novels.

Any kind of *vulgarisation* based on what appears to be a random pile of egg-head paperbacks found in a Mid-West drug-store would be pretty intolerable, even if it were well done; and this is very badly done.

Maurice Cranston

[3] Gollancz, 50s.

Personal Poetry

SENSITIVE, perceptive, astonishingly articulate and intensely vulnerable, Sylvia Plath was a female Gulliver hurtling painfully about a hard and hostile male universe.

The whole landscape
Loomed absolute as the antique world was
Once, in its earliest sway of lymph and sap,
Unaltered by eyes,

Enough to snuff the quick
Of her small heat out, but before the weight
Of stones and hills of stones could break
Her down to mere quartz grit in that stony light
She turned back.

As if to humour her besetting fear of being ground down to nothing, she keeps identifying with small and fragile forms of life—moles, even mushrooms—but the identification is never complete and the other form of life is also a threat. In *The Colossus*,[1] a collection which first appeared in 1960, three years before her death, animal life, nature and civilisation are all equally dangerous, equally destructive. The weather corrodes, the sea batters against obstinate spits of gravel or bellows like a bull at the garden gate. A burnt-out spa is a carcass foundering "under the rubbish of summers."

The small dell eats what ate it once.

In one poem the sea and sky are "horizon-hinged," liable to squash a man flat, and this image of a hinged world closing recurs in another poem about a mussel-hunter who feels shut out of the fishy "otherworld" which eyes him. (Not being absolute, he may not be "unaltered by eyes.") But everything constitutes an

[1] *The Colossus*. By SYLVIA PLATH. Faber & Faber, 18s.

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otherworld and the poet is always too big or too small for it. In "The Beekeeper's Daughter" —which prefigures all the poems about bees in *Ariel*—she is an outsider looking in on an alien and complete world, while in the title poem, the male husband-father-home fills the entire landscape. She works on it and sleeps in it without any hope of escape.

With its persuasive clean lines and its unerring rhythms, her verse moulds its elaborate fantasies so tightly into its very precise observation of natural life that they become, in effect, equally solid. It is only in the final sequence, "Poem for a Birthday," that her hold on reality slips.

Down here the sky is always falling.
Hogwallow's at the window
The star bugs won't save me this month.
I housekeep in Time's gut end
Among emmets and molluscs,
Duchess of Nothing,
Hairtusk's bride.

The short simple words and the vicious nicknames stab out in protest against having to live at all without the option of going back to the safe comforts of childhood. The loss of focus is complete: the pain is still there but she brings us out on the far side of the dizziness and the pathos. Mad images of the garden brush up against glimpses of the mental hospital and her fear of being eaten or crushed now merges into a new fear of being mended and having to go back into the world. The sequence is untypical of *The Colossus* but it is the link with her novel *The Bell Jar* and with the tortured poems in *Ariel*.

Jean-Paul de Dadelsen is another poet whose verse makes something positive out of an utter personal desperation. But unlike Sylvia Plath, who seems to have started off with formidable technical proficiency and an inborn sense of style, he had to forge his own weapons during the fight. He was strongly influenced by Baudelaire and Eliot and his cadences and imagery both derive from the Bible, but the voice that emerges is very much his own. His broken lines and rhythms acquire a melancholy resonance and he uses irony like a club to beat his way through the bristling irascibility he refuses to inhibit. But far from splashing about in his personal pain, he wrestles manfully with big issues—the dimensions of God's absence, the meaning of the second World War. None of the English verse to come out of the war, as Charles Hamblett's anthology[2] so dismally reminds us,

[2] *I Burn for England.* An anthology of the poetry of World War II. Selected and introduced by Charles Hamblett. Leslie Frewin, 50s.

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H·E·B **HEINEMANN**

is on a par with *Jonah*,[3] which is an attempt—no less impressive for its built-in sense of its own inadequacy—to express the guilt-feelings at not deserving to survive when so many good men died and the awareness of not having done enough for them either when they were alive or now, when they may be among us as shades.

Dadelsen felt deeply and his verse is no less valid as a statement of feelings even if you don't accept his premisses. Many of the poems in this selection are attempts to define a position towards God and towards women and often towards both at the same time—women may be acting as servants of a destructive and incomprehensible God. And sometimes the figure of the woman merges with the figure of a guardian angel, only half benevolent and only half believed in.

I find you under my closed eyelids, almost
faceless,
in the interior space which hollows itself out
after midnight.

Like Sylvia Plath's, most of his verse was written under the threat of destruction, but his anxiety was very different. He knew he was dying of brain cancer and he hadn't started writing verse until he was thirty-eight, five years before his death. It was possible for him, though, to feel that there might be a meaning and a value in his own destruction if the space inside him was being hollowed out by God—

open me
so that a little of Your light may fall upon
my absence and the void
of my lost harvest.

James Tate, a comparatively carefree and highly original young American, makes a sure-footed debut in *The Lost Pilot*.[4] He writes in very short lines with quicksilver changes of tone and focus and an extraordinary mixture of empathy and detachment. This, for instance, is about a man throwing himself off a bridge:

Like a sticky leaf, greenish

And sickly, you never open.
You desire to walk not
with us, but on black waters

for us. And, when the glassy
gleam of the moon drew you
with her white eyelashes

---

[3] *Jonah*. By JEAN-PAUL DE DADELSEN. Translated by Edward Lucie-Smith. Rapp and Carroll, 21s.

[4] *The Lost Pilot*. By JAMES TATE. Yale University Press, 28s. cloth; 9s. 6d. paper.

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continually winking, you
leaped, falling in dizzy
spirals like smoke of

an upside-down cigar.
The inside of a river
you found to be

a very unventilated room.

The shortness of the lines sometimes produces too much stress on unimportant words which just happen to come at the beginning or end of a line. But more often it helps the poet to his humorous dramatic effects and to his neat economy. Confident that he can always trim his fantasy, he can afford to let it run riot.

The neighbours on
both sides of me suddenly
realise that they have not
made love to their wives

since 1947. The racket
multiplies. The man downhall
is teaching his dog to fly.

The poems vary enormously in subject-matter and in seriousness but the exuberance and the lightness of touch are unvarying. There is always tenderness in the mockery and mockery in the tenderness, even when he writes about the "compulsive orbiting" of his dead father, the lost pilot, killed in 1944 at the age of twenty-two. It is good to welcome such a consistently enjoyable poet.

John Ashbery's work[5] makes heavier demands on the reader, following on, as it does, from the Eliot of *Four Quartets*, but oscillating much more violently between lush specific images and abstract pondering. The early poems are tantalisingly confused statements of confusion, giving vivid but piecemeal glimpses into scenes which are used partly to contrast the sharp experience with the blurry residue. But the point is made very much better in the thirty-page-long poem "The Skaters." Through his central image of skaters cutting into the surface, but not deeply, and separating from the crowd to trace individual lines, but not for long, he gives substance to his vision of insubstantiality. He knows that

the carnivorous
Way of these lines is to devour their own nature

but for the first time he is fully in control of

the rhythm of the series of repeated jumps from abstract into positive and back to a slightly less diluted abstract.

[5] *Selected Poems.* By JOHN ASHBERY. Jonathan Cape, 18s.

Thomas Becket

A biography by Richard Winston. 'A very good book, sensitive and well written' A. L. Rowse

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by Warren Sylvester Smith. 'Professor Smith's study of late Victorian dissidents is highly apposite today . . . he has patiently and skilfully assembled a great deal of relevant information' Malcolm Muggeridge, *Observer*. Illustrated, 45s.

Constable

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Many of the jumps into positive are very successful, like the long lyrical celebration of happiness in defiance of the heavens, the "bewhiskered old caverns of blue." And he is also effective when he halts the tide of description and speculation to ask short crisp questions like "How much of any one person is there?" At the end, the poem dissolves into fragmentariness

The pump is busted. I shall have to get it fixed

as if he is refusing to marshal his nagging thoughts into any sort of coherent statement. But the poem as a whole constitutes an important one.

THE OTHER LONG POEM, Patrick Kavanagh's *The Great Hunger*,[6] which was first published in 1942, could hardly be more different. It is a very simple and very solid narrative, written with deep sympathy and understanding, about a farm labourer who never marries. The poem takes in the whole of the man's life, distilling his failures and frustrations into a flexible verse which gives substance to the scene and a ringing rhythmic directness to the comments made from outside. We feel the clayeyness spreading from the soil to the labourers' way of living and their way of thinking and there is a compassionate irony in the picture of men giving way to a leisurely seasonal rhythm and forgetting that they are ageing with it.

Kavanagh is a poet who deserves to be taken more seriously, especially by himself. Twenty-five years later, his verse is much less ambitious. *On the Way to the Depot*[7] is always readable, sometimes moving and often witty but often trivial. When he writes about his self-doubts, as he frequently does, he is inclined to let the skin of versification fall rather slackly around what he has to say. The best poem is the most disciplined, "Satire I," an affectionate and accurate parody of Wyatt, which draws an amusing parallel between the Elizabethan court and the élite of contemporary television. In other poems he gives way far too often to the fantasy presence of his dead wife. Although she is there partly as a yardstick for the unsatisfactoriness of everyday living, she leads to rather imprecise measurements.

Ted Walker, on the other hand, always anchors himself very firmly to observed reality. Like Ted Hughes, he thrives on scrutinising the behaviour of animals and of the men in close touch with them. *The Solitaries*,[8] his second collection, may be less lyrical than his first, *Fox on a Barn Door*, but the verse moulds itself more to fit the thing described. "Ox" has short lines with a repetitive thud of half-rhymes to suggest the movements and the mind of a beast following its compulsions and in "Cowman," the verse imitates both the man's movements and his speech-patterns.

The animals sometimes start off as real and end up as metaphors, as in "Homing Pigeons," which works out a parallel between the instinct that takes them back to the attic loft and the force that "drives us back from any fanciful hovering beyond our lives." The best poem is "Apocalypse on the Jetty" which watches the fishermen

settle
themselves to the searchless lust
that clings to them after a kill.

Like their fish, they have become "bait for the want that swallows them."

Ted Walker and James Tate are both poets to watch.

Ronald Hayman

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[6] *The Great Hunger*. By PATRICK KAVANAGH. MacGibbon & Kee, 7s. 6d.
[7] *On the Way to the Depot*. By PATRICK KAVANAGH. Chatto & Windus, 15s.
[8] *The Solitaries*. By TED WALKER. Jonathan Cape, 18s.

ROUTLEDGE & KEGAN PAUL

SCIENCE AND E.S.P.

Edited by
J. R. SMYTHIES

The contributors are: Gilbert Murray, H. H. Price, Rosalind Heywood, Cyril Burt, Alister Hardy, C. D. Broad, C. W. K. Mundle, Henry Margenau, Adrian Dobbs, Emilio Servadio, Aniela Jaffé, Francis Huxley, and John Beloff.

'As Mrs Rosalind Heywood shows in her lively contribution to Dr Smythies's compilation, increasing numbers of respectable modern scientists are being forced to confront the distasteful but irrefutable evidence for the reality of Extra Sensory Perception.'—PHILIP TOYNBEE, *Observer*

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SIR—I AM SORRY *to have to ask you to allow me to mention what everybody declares unmentionable; but as a majority of the population habitually flavour their conversation with it to the extent of mentioning it at every sixth word or so, I shall not make matters much worse by a serious utterance on the subject. My justification shall be that we may presently be saddled with the moral responsibility for monstrously severe punishments inflicted not only on persons who have corrupted children, but on others whose conduct, however nasty and ridiculous, has been perfectly within their admitted rights as individuals.*

I appeal now [1889] *to the champions of individual rights—to Mr. Herbert Spencer, Mr. Auberon Herbert, Lord Bramwell, Mr. Leonard Courtney, Mr. John Morley, Mr. Bradlaugh and the rest—to join me in a protest against a law by which two adult men can be sentenced to twenty years penal servitude for a private act, freely consented to and desired by both, which concerns themselves alone. There is absolutely no justification for the law except the old theological one of making the secular arm the instrument of God's vengeance. It is a survival from that discarded system with its stonings and burnings.* G. BERNARD SHAW

BEING OF AFRICAN DESCENT, *would I be able to feel and know something about Africa on the basis of a common "racial" heritage? Africa was a vast continent full of "my people."... Or had three hundred years imposed a psychological distance between me and the "racial stock" from which I had sprung? Perhaps some Englishman, Scotsman, Frenchman, Swede, or Dutchman had chained my great-great-great-grandfather in the hold of a slave ship; and perhaps that remote grandfather had been sold on an auction block in New Orleans, Richmond, or Atlanta.... My emotions seemed to be touching a dark and dank wall....* But, am I African? *Had some of my ancestors sold their relatives to white men? What would my feelings be when I looked into the black face of an African, feeling that maybe his great-great-great-grandfather had sold my great-great-great-grandfather into slavery? Was there something in Africa that my feelings could latch onto to make all of this dark past clear and meaningful? Would the Africans regard me as a lost brother who had returned?*

I was black and they were black, but my blackness did not help me. RICHARD WRIGHT

THE TALENTS WHICH IN THE *19th century found their entrepreneurial outlet in building a railway, a department store, a foundry, now find it in building a diocese (what industrialist is a match for Cardinal Spellman?), a labour union (what tycoon is as fiercely individualistic as John L. Lewis?), a new university or foundation (what promoter could not learn from Robert Hutchins?)—all the "tertiary" areas of the economy.* DAVID RIESMAN

FROM THE POINT OF VIEW *of the social sciences, London long has been, and Oxford is increasingly, American. Without the Americans we would have hardly enough graduate students to justify our lectures and classes at all. Oxford in the 1950s is for the American students of politics what Paris in the 1920s was for the American student of the fine arts; except that the former brings with him a more substantial baggage; and through his eyes, even those of us who do not know America at first hand see it unfold.*

Political knowledge for the Americans is something to be processed, so that results can be registered and filed and made use of; for the British it is one more source of food for poetic reflection. The American key word is "method": the British "history." MAX BELOFF

NATIONS AS WELL AS MEMBERS *of illustrious families seem increasingly liable nowadays to feelings of guilt about living off the spiritual capital of their ancestors. What else can explain the following extract from a recent official advertisement designed to attract American tourists?—"Many experienced travellers report that the quality of cooking in British hotels and restaurants is now* the best in Europe" (*and the italics are not mine*): *not only is this unexpected amenity considered to have more drawing power than our ancient monuments and institutions, but the continuation of one of our most cherished traditions is expressly denied.* DAVID SYLVESTER

THE ONLY ANSWER *to the facts of the past is not the wasted opportunities of the past but new and different facts in the present. In the end the revision of German history will be achieved not by the criticisms of the historians, valuable though these are, but by a change of heart in the German people. The historian will reflect that change of heart, he may even contribute to it, but he cannot initiate it. If the German people have done with the worship of power, authority, and the nation, they will see the faults in their own history. If they have not, the historians will join the other unheeded voices of German history, and the image in the historian's glass will resume its familiar lineaments.*

ALAN BULLOCK

IT IS ONE OF THE LESSONS *of history that adjoining civilisations must in the long run come into contact and even begin to "cross." The process, when it begins, will naturally be strongest in the debatable land between the eastern Baltic and the Ægean Sea. The West will be wise to be patient. That is one of the conditions of its own perpetuity. If its liberalism and its nationalism and its socialism, each mixed with and each moderating the other, have something to give the border-area of eastern Europe, they will give it in time, and by virtue of patience, when once there is any desire to receive. And that desire may emerge even sooner than we expect.*

ERNEST BARKER

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LETTERS

The Press & Libel

LORD FRANCIS-WILLIAMS' article [ENCOUNTER, September] and Sir Linton Andrews' comment upon it [November] are matters of great interest not only to the press but to the public at large. I have the very greatest respect for Sir Linton's opinion and should differ from it only with the utmost diffidence. He is not only a journalist of outstanding experience and responsibility but one whose service to the Press Council has been of high public importance. Indeed, I doubt whether any reform of our libel laws giving greater protection to the press would be a matter of practical politics if Sir Linton were opposed to it.

None the less, there is one matter on which, for my own part, I cannot bring myself to agree with him. In my view, it would be right to allow the press, in strictly defined circumstances, to rely upon a plea of *qualified privilege*. This does not at all mean that a newspaper which libelled a citizen "by mistake" could avoid paying reasonable damages. The defence of qualified privilege as it exists now between ordinary people, is limited to those communications in respect of which it is held that there was both a duty (moral, social, or legal) to make the communication to those to whom it was made and a legitimate interest on the part of those persons to receive the communication. The circle thus covered by the privilege may in some cases be very large indeed, how large depending upon the circumstances of each case. I see no real legal principle which would prevent all the world having a common interest in knowing some fact of public concern.

Thus, to take an absurd case, if Mr. Mao Tse-tung were to accuse a British statesman of some really grave personal dereliction affecting his public duties, it might well be right that the public should be informed that such an accusation had been made. Yet if a British newspaper were to publish such a report it would, under our existing law, have no defence to an action for libel unless it could prove the accusation true. And to take instances which are not absurd but have recently happened, it seems strange that fear of our libel laws should not only stop the distribution of particular issues of foreign newspapers normally sold in this country but should inhibit British newspapers from reporting as a matter of interest to British subjects what is being said, whether truthfully or not, by influential newspapers abroad about British Ministers or matters affecting the establishment. Not all newspapers have the courage to disregard D.-Notices seeking to impose a similar inhibition under the Official Secrets Act as was recently done by the *Daily Express*.

One can, without stretching one's imagination unduly, think of cases much nearer home in which the public at large might be considered to have *a right to know* and the newspapers *a duty to speak*. This, then, is the first hurdle that in an action for libel a newspaper would have to overcome before it relied upon the defence of qualified privilege—that the matter published was one of general public interest and concern on which it was right that—if the facts were correct—the public at large should be informed and about which, consequently, the Press were entitled to speak. But that would not be the only hurdle. Next they would have to prove that they had exercised all proper diligence and taken all reasonable care before publication to verify the accuracy of that which they published and that they honestly and reasonably believed it to be true. And, finally, that if untrue they had published with equal prominence an adequate refutation and apology.

I believe that subject to these safeguards the public interest would justify any occasional injury to an innocent citizen which might occur through the existence of such a defence in libel actions.

For the rest, I agree with Sir Linton that juries have shown themselves to be unsuitable tribunals for the trial of these actions. And that in these cases damages should be strictly proportionate to the real harm which the libel can be shown to have done—which very often is very little. But I have no great optimism that these reforms in our law will be accomplished. The politicians do not really like the newspapers.

SHAWCROSS

House of Lords

Middle East Dialogue

THE OMINOUS NEWS of the sinking of an Israeli destroyer by the Egyptian navy reached me just as I finished reading Cecil Hourani's article [ENCOUNTER, November]. The explosive implications of this type of incident impart an even greater sense of urgency to his plea for an Arab re-examination of their frozen positions and his rejection of the use of force against Israel.

It is a sad reflection on the isolation of the Arab intellectuals in their sullen entrenchment to observe that many of Mr. Hourani's arguments have been accepted for a long time as self-evident in the West. I would like to suggest that the practical and logical corollary of his stand is the commencement of an informal exploratory dialogue between Arab and Jewish intellectuals.

One may acknowledge the intensity—if not the merit—of the dislike of Arab governments for direct negotiations with Israel. However, considerations which appear to prevent direct interstate conferences are hardly relevant when it comes to talks between those whose primary concern may be—one hopes—a better acquaintance with the other side's point of view, the quest for some common values over and above the antagonism caused by diverging assumptions and the establishment of personal contacts which may be of some use one day when hatred will fade away and the advantages of co-operation between Arab and Israeli will dawn on the embattled and the fanatic.

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Such an Arab–Jewish dialogue would be complementary to the "free discussion among ourselves" which Mr. Hourani propounds—indeed, it would give to that discussion a much-needed infusion of realism.

I am not under the illusion that this enterprise will be free from controversy—but, even so, such a dialectical confrontation may prove quite enlightening. For instance, Mr. Hourani refers to Israel "usurping" the whole of Palestine. Any debate based on this sort of assumption, would be as difficult as an ecumenical one between Christians and Jews based on the agony of the cross.

Then, Mr. Hourani detects an alleged alienation of Jews from the societies in which they have been assimilated ("or at least accepted") brought about by the June crisis. He does not seem to realise that in their support for Israel, Jews in most Western countries acted in harmony with the general Western mood. In Holland, Switzerland, Denmark, and France (to mention only a few) the majority of the people sided with Israel, not because Arab propaganda was inept, but simply because so many people in a free society are capable of making their own assessments of the merits of a dispute—and it is more than likely that they perceived the nature of the whole Arab obsession with Israel well before Mr. Hourani confronted it in his moment of truth. Mr. Hourani speculates on the imaginary horns of Israel's dilemma: Arabisation *v.* racial nationalism. More contact with informed non-Arabs may persuade Mr. Hourani and others, that Israel is contemplating its future without undue fear of such dire "either/or" prospects.

On the other hand, it is obvious that Jewish intellectuals too will have a lot to learn from their Arab counterparts.

This is why, if independent personalities with different points of view would be prepared to meet in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance and humility, the deep divide between them may begin to recede and in the fullness of time conflicting assumptions might eventually be transcended by—if not the light of reason—at least that of moderate reasonableness.

I assure Mr. Hourani, that I do not only speak for myself when I say that Jewish intellectuals in the West are ready to meet him and those who think like him. I hope he will find it possible to accept this invitation in the spirit of conciliation in which it is made.

LIONEL BLOCH

London

Onward from Freud?

Old Critics, New Research — By BRUCE MAZLISH

I SHOULD LIKE to comment on two recent articles. First, a brief comment concerning Alasdair MacIntyre's remarks on my book, *The Riddle of History* [ENCOUNTER, August]. Certainly MacIntyre has a right to his philosophical crochets; and even to the expression of them in his awkward prose (what sort of a clause is "he simply does not seem to see that the propositions which he ascribes to both thinkers he is only able to do so by divorcing them from the quite specific and quite different meanings which they had for each thinker"?). One would have thought, however, that with the right to his personal views went a responsibility, at least to his readers: first to tell them, however, scantily about the theses of the book itself (what reader would have any idea, for example, as to my views about Freud's philosophy of history, or why I thought it important to include him in the book?); and second to warn them, as many works of fiction do, that "Any resemblance between the book as reviewed by MacIntyre and the book as written by Mazlish is purely coincidental."

Now let me turn to a much more interesting piece of writing: Marcus Cunliffe's review of the Freud-Bullitt book on Woodrow Wilson [ENCOUNTER, July]. Here the remarks are informative, acute, and fair. On this basis, Cunliffe then turns to the wider issues, of the over-all relations between psycho-analysis and history. He demonstrates a sure touch for the key points, though he also exhibits on the subject a good deal of ambivalence, to use the psychological term, or judiciousness, to use a more literary one. In any case, a few of his statements seem to merit a more extended discussion.

My first comment concerns Cunliffe's allegation that one reason for the disappointing results in psycho-analysis and history so far is that "even in the single case of history different social sciences like sociology and psychology pull the would-be practitioner in different directions." I would have thought that while old-fashioned psychological history (*e.g.*, the Freud-Bullitt book) ignored sociology the better attempts today necessarily try to relate the insights and data of the two disciplines. Surely, this is one of the strengths of Erik Erikson's *Young Man Luther*: its awareness of class structure, technological change, etc. Psycho-analysts themselves have moved from a concentration on the individual *in vacuo* (read "isolated on the doctor's couch") to ego psychology and an understanding of the individual in the social context. As Cunliffe remarks about Wilson, "He was remarkable. Yet on the whole his contemporaries did not find him odd. He was to them only a vigorous embodiment of American optimism and moralism." Consequently, a good psychohistorical study would find it incumbent to analyse not only the President but the society that supported him and thought him an embodiment of its ideals.

Next, Cunliffe mentions *Young Man Luther*, and laments that "There is no sign that comparable studies are in train. How disheartening for those scholars who have met in conferences and colloquia, yearning to make common cause." While this may

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look to be the case at first glance, it is not really so. In spite of the fact that few scholars even pretend to work in the area (and until recently were discouraged from doing so by the scorn of their colleagues and the hostility of foundations to offering even the smallest financial support), some work of value and interest is going on, and more is in sight. For example, Erikson himself is now finishing his book on Mahatma Gandhi, which will press on with some of the ideas promulgated in *Young Man Luther*. Robert Lifton (author of *Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism*) is engaged on a major study of the Hiroshima experience, as data for a significant reworking of theories about man's attitudes to death, as well as of death symbolism, as a part of historical experience. Another Eriksonian disciple, Suzanne Rudolph, has been working on Gandhi, and problems of cultural contact and psychology, as part of the history of Indian independence. What is most important, however, is that such studies are finally being brought into systematic contact with one another, and some provision being made for continued research and development. Thus, a week's working Conference on Psychohistorical Process was held (in August 1966 and again in 1967, in Wellfleet, Mass.), with such members as Erikson, Lifton, Philip Rieff, Frederick Wyatt, and Frank Manuel, to name a few, in an effort, not to apply psycho-analysis to history—a mistaken idea—but to see what could be done in exploring the theories and potential data of a new discipline—or rather interdiscipline—called psychohistorical process. The results appeared sufficiently worthwhile as to warrant continuation, and a two-year grant was obtained from the American Academy of Arts and Sciences to support further exploration. The aim is not immediate publication, which would be premature. The hope, however, is that at the end of the two years some sort of institutionalisation can take place, embodying sustained research, writing, and training of people in this new discipline. Only then will there be a fair chance that the "disheartening" results that Cunliffe so understandably laments will give way to more successful ones. Patience, then, is part of what is needed with this infant subject.

CUNLIFFE, OF COURSE, might reply that his article was concerned with the fixed principles that would forever prevent psycho-analysis from successfully amalgamating with history, and that therefore patience is not at issue. Such a view, if advanced (and I am not sure that Cunliffe would advance it), would probably be based on a number of erroneous assumptions as to what psychohistorical process is about. Without wishing unduly to prolong this letter, I think it important to allude to three such possible assumptions: (1) that psychohistorical inquiry offers us primarily *causal* explanations. In fact, it offers explanations in terms of correspondence and co-existing processes. As Erikson remarks, about a particular case:

> We cannot escape the conviction that the meaning of an item which may be "located" in one of the three processes [the somatic, the ego, and the societal] is co-determined by its meaning in the other two. An item in one process gains relevance by giving significance to and receiving significance from items in the others. Gradually, I hope, we may find better words for such relativity in human existence. Of the catastrophe described in our first specimen, then, we know no "cause." Instead, we find a convergence in all three processes of specific intolerances which made the catastrophe retrospectively intelligible, retrospectively probable. The plausibility thus gained does not permit us to go back and undo causes. It only permits us to understand a continuum, on which the catastrophe marked a decisive event, which now throws its shadow back over the very items which seem to have caused it. (*Childhood and Society*, 1963, pp. 37–38.)

Put another way, "Being unable to arrive at any simple sequence and causal chain with a clear location and a circumscribed beginning, only triple book-keeping (or, if you wish, a systematic going around in circles) can gradually clarify the relevances and the relativities of all the known data." In sum, psychohistorical inquiry helps us understand the "meaning" of an event, but does not—in fact, cannot—offer us a simple causal explanation of it. (2) That history can be *reduced* to psychoanalytic explanation; this is closely related to our first assumption, and is an equally, if not more, erroneous one. The Freud–Bullitt work is a good warning example here. And (3) that psychohistorical inquiry is merely a matter of *pathology*, of stripping down a great man (or even a people) to his neurotic or psychotic elements. This assumption overlooks the positive aspect of defence mechanisms, neglects all of the recent thinking in psycho-analysis on the adaptive aspects of psychological development, and offers no help in understanding the abilities and accomplishments of its subject.

Cunliffe is absolutely right when he concludes, "So there is no dazzling revelation to be provided by psycho-analysis." Why expect one? Psychoanalysis does not explain all of history, and cannot. It can, however, offer a great deal of assistance in understanding the "meaning" of an event or action, by illuminating the psychological aspect in a social-historical context. After all, it is not revelation but analysis in depth that we expect from psychohistorical inquiry.

It is one of the merits of Cunliffe's discussion that he eventually perceives this, pointing out that "The best of our historians recognise that public events cannot be fully understood without an awareness of their private features: the night-time as well as the daylight of the human mind." With the fuller recognition of this fact, other historians may be encouraged actively to enter the new discipline of psychohistorical process and to work out the necessary theories and experimental studies that will fulfil the promise held out somewhat ambivalently in Cunliffe's article.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Mass.

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Life & Letters Today

London

AN ESTABLISHMENT *called "The Doll's House" in Carlisle Street, Soho, was given a licence by the Greater London Council to show strip-tease to the general public. The Licensing Committee heard with civic phlegm a curious case about "artistes" and amenity, and what the council primly prefers to call "public dancing."*

There was a pained procession of neighbours from Carlisle Street to object that "The Doll's House" would ruin their district and their business in this quiet cul-de-sac. "It would introduce a garish and degenerate element into the street," their counsel said.

A solicitor, whose firm has occupied its beautiful Georgian house since 1813, feared that the atmosphere of a strip-tease theatre would upset his staff and clients. The chairman of Martin Secker and Warburg, the publishers, said it would be very bad for authors if on their way to discuss literature they had to pass the Scylla of a strip theatre. THE TIMES

London

JUST AFTER *a woman announcer had read the weather forecast before the BBC's 10 o'clock radio news last night a man was heard to say: "Go on. Be a devil. Give us a bit." The BBC was inundated with inquiries from listeners. It explained, "A microphone was faded up slightly too early in the news studio. Somebody was eating chocolate and somebody else, obviously not aware that the microphone was live, asked for a piece of chocolate. It was as simple as that."* DAILY TELEGRAPH/MAIL

Blackpool

LORD ARRAN, *who recently piloted the Sexual Offences Bill through the House of Lords, has applied for the Liberal Whip.* THE GUARDIAN

Paris

MORE THAN *half the population of France never open a book and the most prolific readers are teenagers.*

A survey, made by the French Public Opinion Institute, shows that 57 per cent. of Frenchmen do not read books.

The survey disproves the theory that television is killing the habit of reading. The biggest book-buyers also own television sets. HERALD TRIBUNE

Blackpool

JEREMY THORPE, *the ever-ebullient Leader of the Liberal Party, was in a cheerful, but still obviously nervous mood in Blackpool after making what was in effect his debut as the successor to Jo Grimond before a full meeting of the Liberal Assembly.*

"Of course, I'm not really the one to say how it went down, but I don't think I stuttered, or split any of my infinitives, and that's the important thing! EVENING STANDARD

Scarborough

CONSIDER, *if you can bear it, the massive, purposive, commanding, restructured, reorganised, modernised, processed, and computerised sentence from the official and unfortunately all-too-accurate text of the Prime Minister's speech this morning. I do not mind that Mr. Harold Wilson uses sentences of 19th-century length when celebrating 20th-century achievement. I am all for tolerating every man's idiosyncrasies, and it would be both foolhardy and excessive to suppose that a politician who used sentences of Trollope's length would necessarily possess Trollope's discipline over them. My point is other than this. Buried deep within this jungle of a Prime Ministerial sentence is the odd and outrageous thought that nuclear bombs are good for spastics.* DAILY MIRROR

Cape Town

THE CAPE TOWN *city librarian has banned the works of Enid Blyton, the children's author, from his shelves. The librarian, Mr. G. H. Vermeulem, said he did not like the way the books are written. Children portrayed in them were impertinent to their parents, he said.*

DAILY TELEGRAPH

London

HARRAP'S *New Shorter French and English Dictionary, an extremely useful work of reference for the businessman with his eyes on Europe, has been brought up to date.*

Among the new entries are a number of modern words and expressions, such as "techniques marchandes" (merchandising); "la gratte" (fringe benefits); and for both professional and private use, "balconnet" (strapless brassière), which goes well with "être dans le vent" (to be with it.) However, "langueyer" (examiner of hog's tongues) and "décubitus" (the recumbent position) have been rejected as having fallen out of use. THE TIMES

London

AVANT-GARDE DERRIERES: *the surest way to launch new magazines is an exotic literary menu for the first issue. But some banquets sound too sumptuous to be true. "Avant Garde," a "new wild thing" on the New York scene, is presently promising, among other delights: The Weird Personal Life of J. Edgar Hoover; the Intellectual Companions of Jacqueline Kennedy; Ingenious Legal Ways around the Abortion Laws; Synthetic (and therefore legal) Marijuana; the Prison Poems of Ho Chi Minh; Twiggy's Baneful Influence on the eating habits of American Women; Kenneth Tynan on Bottoms; the Black Muslim Cookbook; Aubrey Beardsley's Suppressed Erotica and LBJ's Dependence on Tranquillisers. They probably won't be allowed a second issue; but what is there left to write about anyway?*

THE GUARDIAN

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Replies

I SHALL BE quite happy if readers of my review and Mazlish's comment take the time to read his book in order to judge between us; but I doubt if they will. It is not unimportant that Mazlish talks about my "philosophical crotchets" when he means to refer to my arguments. For philosophy is a matter of arguments. If Mazlish—instead of behaving like an outraged Bostonian dowager—wants to argue that my premises are false or confused or my inferences illegitimate, I shall be interested in listening to him. About one thing, of course, Mazlish is right. My prose style is horrible.

ALASDAIR MACINTYRE

University of Essex

MY COMMENTS suffered from ignorance. I knew of some of the "psychohistorical" work Bruce Mazlish mentions but not all. Other correspondents have reminded me of comparable work, *e.g.*, the biographical studies made by political scientists of James Forrestal and of Kurt Schumacher.

My main point though was that few professional *historians* are interested in such approaches, and that although this may be an indication of the intellectual sluggishness of the discipline, within their own terms they are not entirely wrong. The majority of historians (*i.e.*, people who teach history courses in universities, as members of history departments) concern themselves with problems for which "psychohistorical" lines of enquiry are not of much relevance. Again, they may thereby reveal themselves to be a dull bunch. I was reporting the main state of affairs: Professor Mazlish is interested in a new development. I would guess that for the mass of historians it will remain a somewhat peripheral development. The growth of interest in the history of ideas may prove me wrong. I hope so.

MARCUS CUNLIFFE

University of Sussex

Christmas without tears

see page 33

AUTHORS

James Morris, a regular contributor to ENCOUNTER, is the author of (among other books) *The Hashemite Kings* (1958), *Venice* (1960), and *Oxford* (1965). As he writes: "... My new book, *Pax Britannica*, which Faber are publishing next year, is the first of a trilogy about the British Empire—a sort of enormous narrative picture in the Frith tradition. The project, being the centre-piece of my own life, so to speak, means a great deal to me, and I don't mind publicising the fact that it's going to cover the whole rise and climax and emancipation of the Victorian Empire—in case others are planning similar Oriental Entertainments...."

Gore Vidal published a volume of critical essays, *Rocking the Boat*, in 1963 (Heinemann). His novels include *Julian* (1964) and *Washington D.C.* (1967)....

Peter Gay is Professor of History at Columbia University. *The Rise of Modern Paganism*, the first part of his two-volume study of the Enlightenment, has recently appeared (Knopf), and *A Loss of Mastery: Puritan Historians in Colonial New England* (University of California Press) was reviewed by D. W. Brogan in the August ENCOUNTER....

Arthur Seldon is Editorial Director of the Institute of Economic Affairs in London and an Examiner in Economics to the University of London. He is the author of several monographs on taxation and welfare....

Louis J. Halle is the author of *Men and Nations* (1963), *The Society of Man* (1965) and *The Cold War as History* (1967). He is Professor at the Institut Universitaire des Hautes Etudes in Geneva....

Ronald Hayman is just finishing his first novel. In January Heinemann will publish his four critical studies of Samuel Beckett, John Osborne, Harold Pinter and John Arden....

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